The University of Chicago
FOUNDED BY JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

THE IDEA OF GOD IN RELATION TO THEOLOGY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE DIVINITY SCHOOL IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

BY
ELIPHALET ALLISON READ

CHICAGO
The University of Chicago Press
1900

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CHAPTER I.

BELIEF IN GOD.

Worship of God constitutes an integral part of human life. The religious aspect of history is an index of the intellectual, moral, social, and political conditions of the race. The lowest orders of society and the most advanced live, move, and have their being, very largely controlled by the thoughts clustering around the central idea that behind or beyond the observed phenomena of nature exists the supernatural as a creating and modifying cause. The determining characteristics of the idea of God vary with different peoples according to experience, but the conception itself is so general and significant that from this standpoint as from no other one may accurately perceive the progress of the world's thought, the development of national life, the growth of moral consciousness, the motive of individual effort.

Does so universal a fact rest for its validity upon a logical demonstration? No one questions the value of logic in applying this truth to matters of conduct and thought. Indeed, the processes of reasoning are constructive in faith. But our question lies deeper: Does reasoning create belief? "Canst thou by searching find out God?"[1] This question does not imply that God is unthinkable. Nay, the idea itself may condition thought; but to say that God is the *sine qua non* of thought is certainly not to prove His absolute existence. A truth which exists for thought is conditioned by it. For the same reason a truth which is the result of thought is not absolute. The logical faculty is itself more independent than a fact which is logically proved. If by method of proof we mean the syllogism, the result of the process is limited by the nature of the premises. The very character of the truth to be proved precludes the possibility of such a thing.

The stock arguments which have been constructed in support of the truth of God's existence have been mercilessly shattered by logicians. They who have conquered by the sword of reason have perished by the same weapon. The best that has been done has made God's existence a postulate of reason. No proof, as such, has resulted in putting the fact beyond dispute.

[1] Job 11:7.

Among all these attempts to prove the existence of God the ontological argument is the most conclusive. From the days of Anselm until now this form of thought has been recognized as containing the elements of a satisfactory solution to the difficulty presented in our question. But the most complete arrangement of these elements which modern philosophical literature contains[1] is satisfactory, not as proof, but as a statement of a fact lying deeper in human consciousness than cognition, in the strict use of that term, can possibly go. To say that the very fact of self-consciousness demands a higher self in which the reflected phases of experience, the self and the not-self, are unified is, of course, to prove the necessity of the higher self in a process of complete thought; but this necessity is a logical necessity only, and hence the higher self is not real in the sense of having objective existence. In the fact that this higher self exists for reason knowledge lies the weakness of the ontological argument.

The cosmological argument is equally unsatisfactory. This is an attempt to prove from the assumed facts of finite, conditioned, and contingent existence the reality of the infinite, absolute, ontologically necessary, perfect Being. Without the assumption the argument vanishes away. Now, the nature of the assumption is that of a partial truth. The finite, the conditioned, the contingent have relative meaning only. From the point of view of the universe as a complete whole these things are unreal. We cannot say, from either the individual or the universal standpoint, that they are more than objects of thought. In contemplating the facts of finite existence the mind naturally seeks the higher sphere of the infinite which alone gives meaning to the finite as an idea. But the infinite, in this case, is only a condition of thought. Likewise the idea of a first cause may be the completion of a logical process in which the causal notion finds rest, but to suppose that this notion is identical with the perfect Being is at once to beg the question under discussion. On the basis of Aristotelian realism the argument is valid, but if Peripatetic dogmatism is not final authority in metaphysics, the argument must be abandoned.

Of a different character, but still less satisfactory, is the so-called teleological argument. It is an attempt to build up first of all the premise that there is manifested everywhere in nature and life a worthy design. This is the minor premise of the argument which concludes that there exists a single designing and creative reason as the supreme cause of the world. We need not stop to question the major premise

[1] Principal Caird, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion.*

which in all cases of this argument is assumed rather than inferred. But the second proposition is supposed to be based on actual observation. To be true, all existences must have as their end something worthy of a Creator. It is not enough to find in the world things of beauty which awaken our admiration, nor even to discover that the action of one thing upon another is according to fixed mechanical laws. We must be able to show that the individual activities of the forces of the universe produce ends worthy of a rational mind. What is the worthy end produced by the simple recurrence of events as seen in the movements of heavenly bodies? Of course, these phenomena exhibit a balance and certainty which are interesting to the mind of the observer. In the organic world there is also observed complete adjustment of parts to the whole, but what design is exhibited in flowers which are born to blush unseen, and in the countless forms of growth which in no sense adorn anything but the pages of text-books on biology? If we take careful observations in human life, the evidence of lack of worthy design is also superabundant. Ideals of good are not generally realized. People are born, live, and die without any purpose being achieved in their lives. The living and dying of thousands produce no worthy effect that human eyes can see. To human vision much of the so-called development in mankind is meaningless movement. There is just enough truth in the design idea to popularize the argument, certainly not enough to make it conclusive. We can even go so far as to say that to an absolute mind all existence may be meaningful, and that all facts give evidence of worthy ends, but this probability, since it is probability, destroys the argument, as such.

As proofs these arguments are not conclusive. But this is not equivalent to saying they perform no part in matters of belief; indeed, to a certain type of mind they are strong enough to materially affect the attitude of will which we designate faith. That is to say, from the logical standpoint they do not necessitate belief in the existence of God, while practically they serve a worthy purpose in the lives of those affected by them. This is due, however, not to the proofs, as such, but to the elements of truth which they all contain. Some genuine phases of experience are to be found in all these arguments. And if faith is ever inspired by means of these forms of statement, the credit is to be given to the facts which, to most minds at least, are as effective in the religious realm without the arguments as with them. The evidences of order and design in the world and human life are sufficient to inspire in some the feeling of reverence and the idea of a

purposing mind. The sight of the starry heavens, the majestic movement of the heavenly bodies, sense-perceptions taken up by the imagination and carried to the very limits of thought, may awaken the sense of the sublime, which to an appreciative, interpretative soul is the felt presence of God. Likewise the facts associated with the ontological argument may awaken faith in the Absolute. In self-consciousness may be found the elements of this belief. By self-consciousness we mean, not the idea of it, but that mysterious thing itself. In every conscious state the whole mind is present. What characterizes a single "field" is the focal point therein. The state of consciousness in which I occupies the centre and not-I the "margin" is not at once a clearly defined idea, but is primarily a feeling consisting of or having associated with it rudimentary intellection and impulse. Not least of the characteristics in this elementary stage of ideation concerning the self is the consciousness of dependence. The self acts and is acted upon. An original instinct is thus set free. The sense of otherness is sufficient in many cases to lead almost immediately to an act of faith in which the self recognizes that upon which it depends as good and to which it yields itself for life. This instinct for God is at the very root of self-consciousness. When taken up by the higher activities of intellection the fact of God's existence becomes self-evident.

This experience is the element of value in the ontological argument, but does not exhaust the subject of consciousness as a means of guaranteeing the truth of God's existence. All knowledge is mental experience. Scientific knowledge is mediated by the senses. That this is not all of truth individual experience loudly testifies. Ever since Kant wrote the *Critique of Pure Reason* philosophy has reckoned seriously with the problem of a knowledge as real as, if not more so than, that which is grasped and coördinated by means of the "reason" categories. There is a world of truth to which "reason" is blind. It is that phase of the conscious process in which are articulated the fears and the hopes of the human heart, the soul's appreciation of the true, the beautiful, and the good, those meaningful aspirations of mankind for a better life, and those imperative commands of duty. Are these things data for genuine knowledge? When we examine the experience of the race as reflected in history, when we interrogate ourselves as to the worthful elements of life, we are impressed with the importance which such facts have in making up the body of accepted truth. Without judgments of value civilization could not exist, and character, the greatest of all realities, would be meaningless. Out

of these experiences springs belief in God. Human life is aimless without Him. Duty is significant only as the personal, moral law is real. The world is a dark chamber of death without His presence. Our very nature necessitates His existence, and by the act of faith which accepts Him as real this which is best, truest, and eternal is realized as religion. God alone is absolute truth, complete good, eternal beauty. The will to believe is the means by which this truth is mediated, and conduct, worship, and creed express the truth in actual, practical life.

We designate these two orders of knowledge the philosophical and the religious. Each is valid in its own domain. Philosophy is concerned with the universe as construed to reason. As such it is a product of the activity of the mind in the realm of phenomena. It is a construction of knowledge independent of the demands of the feelings and will. It is a search for the fundamental principle of existence as related to knowledge. Philosophy is the work of individual minds. The demands of thought are absolutely imperative. It matters not if the Absolute is impersonal, good, bad, or indifferent. Truth, not life, is its goal.

On the other hand, the sphere of religion is that of moral values. Religion is the consciousness of God, a recognition of being in personal relationships with the author of the true, the good, and the beautiful. It is the realm of devotion, reverence, and love. It is making God a constant moral motive in one's life, the exercise of faith in the midst of difficulty, the yielding of one's self to the demands of duty. It springs from the felt need of forgiveness, the craving for certainty and fellowship, and the desire for peace. It is the life of man at its highest power.

If we thus conclude that the sphere of religion is that of faith and the sphere of philosophy that of reason, that in religion the experiences of the moral nature are coördinated and in philosophy those of the rational nature, that religion has to do with personal relationships and philosophy with the relations between ideas, that religion values truth and philosophy searches for what is true, that religion has its end in character and philosophy in knowledge — contrasted as they thus appear, these two aspects of truth are in fact interdependent and mutually conditioning. All the facts and laws of scientific knowledge, when interpreted in view of human life and destiny, reveal their innermost significance. On the other hand, the objects of faith, God and the moral law, become serviceable by means of rational comprehension.

Religion, as it forms a part of the time process, is a fit subject for observation, explanation, and classification. The interdependence of these seemingly contrasted aspects of truth is shown from the fact of the mind being an organic unit. Viewed from the standpoint of consciousness the difference between them is that of function and form. As related to experience they are one.

The analysis of consciousness thus reveals trustworthy grounds for belief in God. The universal character of such an attitude of mind and heart as the history of man exhibits is thus explained. Because of this province of faith, both in the origin and outcome of religion, no scientific student can afford to pass by the realities of belief. Religion belongs to man. His highest life is expressed in religious terms. The future must be governed ever more and more by the motive of worship.

CHAPTER II.

THE EVOLUTION OF RELIGION.

Every worthy phase of human life is a result of previous stages of development. Religion is no exception to this fact. Conceptions of God have undergone modification according to the changes in the mental and moral horizon of man. The being of God is eternal, but knowledge of Him is imperfect as long as the means of comprehending divine truth are imperfect. Even revelation is partial, is incomplete, when viewed from the standpoint of God. Language is inadequate to convey the full significance of the Infinite.

It is reasonable to suppose that religion, which is related to the highest welfare of man, has at every stage of progress been adapted and accommodated to the conditions of human life. The religion suited to man's highest needs would be inefficient when these needs were unrecognized. Belief in God is not a ready-made product, an objective, perfected gift from heaven. The laws of mental life are not contradicted, or set aside in this realm. All knowledge is at first vague and indefinite. The progress of religion has been by a process somewhat similar to the unfolding life of a child. Knowledge of home is in the early stages of his life very incomplete. The meaning of parental love is made clear by means of experience. The care of the child on the part of the parent is constant, but appreciation of that interest and affection from the child's standpoint grows with the succeeding years. In some such way man comes to know God.

I say that man was made to grow and not stop :
That help he needed once and needs no more,
Having grown but an inch by is withdrawn ;
For he hath new needs and new helps to these.
This imports solely, man should mount on
Each new height in view ; the help whereby he mounts,
The ladder-rung his foot has left may fall,
Since all things suffer change save God the truth.
Man apprehends him newly at each stage,
Whereat earth's ladder drops, its service done.
God's gift was that man should conceive of truth
And yearn to gain it, catching at mistakes
As midway helps, till he reach fact indeed.[1]

In endeavoring to ascertain the character of primitive belief in God one finds himself confronted with almost insurmountable difficulties. Scientific research can carry the student back into the dawn of history. Beyond this all is shadowy and conjectural. Just as in the dawn of day the earth, sea, and sky form pictures more or less unreal, give impressions on the organ of vision which the rising sun modifies or dispels, so earliest history is accompanied by imaginings on the part of the searcher for truth, fancies of thought, which, doubtless, are very imperfect descriptions of facts.

Whatever may be said of this prehistoric period of human life, the earliest accounts of the doings of the race contain evidence that one chief concern of man was religious observance. Every civilization has been characterized by belief in the Eternal. Did religion have its origin in instinctive fear, instinctive demand for explanation, or instinctive will to live? Undoubtedly these factors, perhaps many others, played an important part. The destructive forces about him awoke the sense of dependence in man; the never-ending process of change in nature stimulated inquiry in the realm of cause; and the struggle for life developed undoubtedly the spirit which resists annihilation.

These causes may imperfectly explain the existence of Nature-worship, Ancestor-worship, and worship of the Supreme One, all of which forms of religion are found in earliest civilization. The experience of man was translated into ceremonies which to him were prayer for propitiation, protection, and deliverance. As the child endows with life all moving objects about him, so the savage gives life to the forces of nature and seeks their aid to enable him to avoid destruction. The

[1] Browning, *A Death in the Desert.*

vicissitudes of life accompanying the rise of the social order had a tendency to call into prominence the heroes of war. The victorious chieftain received reverence and adoration from the members of the clan. Even his death could not efface his memory. He then became their divinity. As clans were merged into tribes the conditions were favorable for forming a hierarchy of such gods. Circumstances of conquest determined the order of greatness. Eventually, as society became more permanent, there was brought into clearer light the belief in one God who was above all others in power. This being was usually a Nature-spirit.

Is it possible that the modern conceptions of God found in the great religions of the earth are outgrowths from such beginnings? One might as well ask if the modern methods of manufacture have any historic connection with the crude modes of work in the Stone Age. To affirm that religion began under conditions and assumed forms altogether contrary to our modern ideas does not in any sense detract from the worthfulness of faith. Nor does such an affirmation cast any reflection upon the Christian religion as one of special revelation. Jesus came in the fulness of time. Could he have come any earlier in the development of civilization and achieved the end for which he came? Nay, the steps of the race as well as of the righteous are ordered of the Lord. Some suppose that to conclude that religion had a natural origin entirely does away with any sense of authority in matters of faith. Not at all, for the natural is supernatural. God is in the history of man leading him by meaningful steps of experience to understand his law. The Old Testament itself is proof that the best that God could do for man was achieved by a series of progressive stages. It can be no aspersion on commerce, on politics, on literature, on art, or on society to say that all these phases of life had humble and meagre forms of intelligence in which to first express themselves. If so, these primitive ideas of God found in Nature-worship, in Ancestor-worship, and so forth, may justly be considered as the lawful beginnings of true religion.

What, then, has been the law of religious development? This question can be answered by examining the most constructive side of individual experience, namely, the activities of the will. In the fact that the moral nature of the race has undergone transformation, that the moral consciousness has been enriched and ennobled, we find the clue to the solution of the problem. The recognition of good has determined for man the content of his conception of God. This has not been

without God's help, as some would suppose. In our inner life there is a miniature universe. Individual experience gets its value from the dictator of duty, the soul's idea of the *summum bonum*. The processes of thought, feeling, and will, complete the circle of possible knowledge. The idea of God is immediately related to these processes of experience. The purest thought, the most æsthetic appreciation, the most constant and absolute worth is God. These experiences of the soul in no sense exhaust Him, in no sense measure the infinity of His being. They are but reflected rays from the source of light.

That this subjective fact is guaranteed in objective truth rests upon an assumption that there is a kinship between the soul and Deity. The statement of Scripture that man was made in the image of God would be to many sufficient evidence that it is not only an assumption. It is revelation, and the experience of the race has put the fact beyond dispute. That moral endeavor has meaning, that there is truth which is not relative, that life is not an empty bubble, receives validity in the same assumption. Man's best ideal of goodness is somewhat like God. Humanity and divinity are not incommensurable terms. Unless this is so, man is no better than the lower forms of organic life.

Viewed from the standpoint of history God is a process of valuation. We are constantly recasting our conceptions of Him in the light of moral experiences. The law of religious development is herein made manifest. It is the law which is exhibited in the growth of moral standards, in the strengthening and purifying of the moral consciousness. As the inner life of man seeks higher and higher attainment, urged on by the ever-present spirit of truth, so by this means his religion is given clearer and more definite significance. The element of time is a necessity here as elsewhere. God is progressively known. This knowledge has its beginning in the vague notion apprehended by the intuition of the soul, and completes its course for the individual in the wider ranges of experience by means of all the light which spiritual truth sheds upon the spheres in which he lives. In the last analysis God and the good are one.

Religion which is co-extensive with the life of the race is thus changed, purified, and spiritualized by means of the evolution of the moral sentiments. However, this modification, which is perceptible in broad epochs of history, is brought about, not always by the noiseless methods of transformation observed in the organic world of nature, but as frequently by revolution and disruption. This is due to the universal tendency of religion to fix itself in dogma, institutions, and

ceremonial worship. In the course of time these externals become identified with religion of the spirit and block the way for religious progress. This is the history of thought which leads to reformation. This tendency to externalism is the explanation of the other fact, so frequently observed in the history of the race, that the formal religion of a period is generally somewhat behind the moral ideals of the contemporary prophets of righteousness.

A brief survey of the religion of the Greeks and that of the Israelites will serve to illustrate the operation of this law of religious development.

Grecian mythology assumed the character of the people among whom it arose. Gods were like men endowed with passion and greed. Homer and Hesiod sang in immortal verse their deeds of valor, and encouraged the people to worship. When in later years Greek philosophy had its birth, and social customs and religious practices were subjected to the close scrutiny of the lofty-minded Eleatics, the imperfections of these religious ideas were brought to light. The people would no longer worship gods who were blameworthy, shameful, full of theft, adultery, and deceit, when once the moral consciousness was quickened by the new spirit. Against the abominations of the early Greek religion Xenophanes utters his voice: "One there is mightiest among men who neither in form nor thought is like unto men. Yet mortals think that gods like themselves are born, have shape, voice, and raiment. Surely if lions and cows had hands as men do they would make gods like themselves. Horses would have horse-like gods, and cows would have gods with horns and hoofs."[1]

Such criticisms meant the downfall of Greek polytheism. The best thought of the time was directed away from these crude conceptions of religion to find a temporary satisfaction in the study of nature. The popular demand for objects of worship was gratified by the conception of an abstract basis of existence, the First Cause. He was the source of all being — nay, He was being itself, the all-inclusive unity. Speculation was thus freed from the control of religious dogma, and delighting in its freedom produced many phases of thought.

Platonic idealism and Aristotelian realism left for the Greeks metaphysical conceptions of the Absolute altogether devoid of religious value. God is pure form or idea, self-moved primal reason, exalted in majesty above the world in which man has his being. He is anterior and superior to all existence. His life consists in reflection upon all intelligible truth.

[1] Mullach, p. 101.

The most religious aspect of Greek thought is that expressed in the philosophy of the Stoics. The influence of Aristotle's conception of God as a being completely transcending the world was met by the Stoic idea of divine immanence. To the Stoics God was the soul of the world, the universal, living reason which guides and governs all things. God penetrates the world everywhere and is the source of its life. Cleanthes thus addresses the Ruler of the world :

> Zeus, ruler of nature, that governest all things with law,
> Hail! for lawful it is that all mortals should address Thee.
> For we are Thy offspring. . . . .
> Therefore will I hymn Thee and sing Thy might forever,
> For Thee doth all this universe that circles round the earth obey, moving whither-so-ever Thou leadest, and is gladly swayed by Thee. . . . . Thou guidest aright the Universal Reason, that roams through all things mingling itself with the greater and the lesser lights, till it have grown so great, and become Supreme King over all.[1]

But speculative metaphysics had too strong a hold on the Greek mind to permit this religious impulse having free course. The question of nature and its cause finally resolved itself into the critical question of knowledge or the nature of mind, and in the conflict between scepticism and dogmatism Greek philosophy went out into the darkness and mystery of Neo-Platonism with its conception of God as the Supreme One "who is everything and nothing imaginable."

Greek philosophy overthrew polytheism, but put nothing in its place save abstract metaphysics. This utter failure, as viewed from the religious standpoint, illustrates the principle that without a strong and clear moral consciousness dominant in religion religious development is impossible. When the Greek lost faith in the gods, religion as an institution fell into decay. Henceforth expressions of belief in the Infinite were individual in obedience to individual conceptions of reality. With Plato reality was ideal, and God was the idea of good. With Socrates reality was moral conduct, and God was justice and truth. With Aristotle reality was form, and God was pure thought. With the Stoics reality was active reason, and God was law. With the sceptics of all schools reality could not be known, and God was not. With the Neo-Platonists reality was a process of emanation, and God was the transcendent origin and end of all things. Without a continuity of moral consciousness there could be no development of faith. The last word of pre-Christian metaphysics was — despair.

[1] Translated by T. W. Rolleston. The hymn in complete form may be found in Mahaffy's *Greek Life and Thought.*

The development of religion more directly related to the best conception of God is found in the history of Israel. In pre-prophetic times Jehovah was the God of the Israelites, and they His peculiar people. He fought their battles and sent blessings upon their flocks and families. The gods of other tribes were inferior to Jehovah, and Israel could do no greater wrong than to forsake His worship. Jehovah was jealous when His people sought the favor of other gods.[1]

Jehovah was preëminently a moral God. In addition to His attributes of power He was holy and just. He demanded worship, but always insisted on His people having innocency of hand and purity of heart. Prophets denounced idolatry and sin. They prayed for deliverance from the bondage of iniquity, that the blessing of righteousness might rest upon the nation. They with keenest insight saw a holy will as the guardian of the people's welfare. As they looked back over the successes and defeats, the varied experience of Israel since the days of Moses, they were able to discern the real character of God. His blessing attended righteous conduct, His punishment followed disobedience to the moral law. This revelation by means of the voice of prophecy was the salvation of the religion of Israel. Unlike the Greeks, the Israelites were never called upon to decide between morality and religion. Their manner of life was such that the moral ideal was constantly purified. They at length, by bitter experience, learned the lesson that Jehovah is alone God, and that because of the power of righteousness Israel's kingdom would yet extend and include the world.

The one dominating conception in Jewish religious history was thus the holiness of God. The Jews became the religious teachers of the world because of the potency of this idea. This moral principle animated Jewish life and was the motive power in developing the Jewish religion. To the Jews God was always the embodiment of their highest ideal. The content of this ideal is unfolded in their history from the time of Moses until Samuel, from Samuel to the great prophets of the eighth century, from that time to the days of the captivity and the restoration, from the restoration and the consequent ceremonialism to the days of the Roman conquest, until finally, purified and enriched by the message and life of Jesus, the conception of God's loving holiness was set free from the narrow confines of Judaism to bless mankind with a perfect faith.

[1] Exodus 20:2, 3; 1 Samuel 17:46.

This contribution to religious development is incomparably greater than that wrought out in Greek philosophy. The metaphysical speculations of the Greeks command our admiration, but the religious convictions of Israel grip man's inner life and quicken his conscience. The Greek began his speculations with a study of nature, and arrived finally at an abstract conception of the world-ground. The Israelite began with the thought of a protecting deity who was holy and just, and finally reached the conception of a God whose will is absolute. To the Greek God was a regulative notion; to the Israelite He was an object of worship, an active, living, personal reality. To the Greek God was the rational order of the world; to the Israelite He was the author and vindicator of the moral order. One development resulted in metaphysical monism, the other in ethical monotheism.

Thus in the life of these two great peoples the law of religious development is illustrated. Belief in God is enriched as human experience is widened and deepened in the moral realm. In primitive conditions, when the intellect of man is undeveloped and the moral consciousness is obscure, man cannot know God as He is, even though audible voices should proclaim Him. Knowledge of God to be effective and complete must be mediated in human experience. Hence to ascribe to the Absolute the most worthy ideals and to realize their potency in developing character is a true means of knowing Him. In doing the truth man comes to spiritual light.

Because Jesus is the full expression of man's highest moral ideal he is a perfect revelation of God. Because in him the life of God was lived under real human conditions he is the Saviour of men. Because he fulfils the desire of the soul in its aspiration for the true, the beautiful, and the good, because his moral nature is inexhaustible, he is the supreme authority for religious life. Henceforth progress toward a more worthy conception of God is by him who is the way, the truth, and the life. He, who by his matchless personality re-created the converging lines of philosophy and religion, is the answer to every doubt that may harass the Christian. The moral ideals of the prophets of all ages and the deepest reality after which philosophy seeks find in him a perfect synthesis.

> "And so the Word had breath, and wrought
> With human hands the Creed of Creeds,
> In loveliness of perfect deeds,
> More strong than all poetic thought."

CHAPTER III.

THE RELIGION OF JESUS AND ITS RELATION TO PHILOSOPHY.

Jesus came into the world as a messenger from God. His was a new revelation to an age that sadly needed divine help. He was born at a time when to human eyes the world had reached a fearful crisis. Philosophical scepticism was dominant in the centres of Greek thought. Here religion was dead, and metaphysics, its substitute, failed to satisfy the demands of the human heart. Among the Romans of the capital, religion, consisting of heathen rites and ceremonies, was exceedingly popular. Even social functions were carried on with forms of worship, but these religious acts were as depraved as the degenerated condition of Roman society called for, and that was as low as the human imagination could portray. Man has never more thoroughly disgraced himself than did the citizens of Rome during the early years of our era. Wealth and leisure had borne fruit in the complete decay of standards of conduct. Rome, the mistress of the world, opulent and exalted, was daily being betrayed by the perfidy and indulgence of her subjects. The once proud and stately Empire tottered on its crumbling foundation. In Palestine the Jews were made to suffer the heavy bondage of taxation and the spirit-breaking power of a foreign sovereign. This awoke new expectations of a deliverer. Added to this political subjection was the more grievous yoke of traditionalism. Legalism had blasted religious life. Yet they had faith. The priestly class by teaching and example presented a caricature of the God whom the prophets had declared. How sad is the picture which Judaism presents in those days! The people had a deep sense of God, yet had no hope of fellowship with Him. They longed for deliverance from sin, yet the way through ceremonial observances was weary and uncertain. In their zeal for religion they had lost its power. They were quick in conscience, but altogether misguided in judgment. The dark night of formalism was lighted with no star of spiritual illumination. It is little wonder that despair was gradually taking the place of expectation. Such were the conditions of religious and social life when Jesus began his career as the Saviour of men.

I. THE RELIGION OF JESUS.

He who came as the supreme revealer of God to man established no formal religion, organized no formal society, propounded no system of dogma, left no written creed for those who should become believers in his truth. His revelation was primarily a life, and the

potency of his message was in a living realization of the truth he taught. He was the exponent of religion in terms of feeling and willing.

When the personal factor is forgotten the key to the mysteries of God disclosed in Jesus is lost. What he experienced in thinking, in feeling, in willing is Christianity. This form of religion is unique in that its code of ethics is derived from a real human and divine life, not theoretically stated in form of precepts. Jesus nowhere enjoins any duty upon a disciple which has not first been tested in his own experience. The self-consciousness of the man of Nazareth is the full source of his revelation to the world. And, consequently, what cannot be found there cannot possibly belong to this religion. He, not law, not ritual, not creed, is the standard of conduct and belief.

More than this, his earthly experience was the constructive factor in his revelation. Not only did he experience to the full extent the Gospel which was his revelation, but that experience was the source of it for himself. The incarnation was not a fictitious parade of God in human disguise. The growth of Jesus from babyhood to manhood was normal and natural. Nowhere previous to his baptism can there be found evidence of miraculous power or knowledge. In his development, physical and mental, he was subject to human limitations. Without this being a fact the incarnation is a fiction. His consciousness was a result of actual time and space events, and his religious knowledge was the product of moral judgment upon these same perceptions.

Hence the revelation given in the consciousness of Jesus is an interpretation of actual human events, and not, as some suppose, new fact, new truth, brought from other worlds. The genius of this religion is thus disclosed. This is the explanation of its mighty influence among men. Jesus came not to re-create the world or man. He does not even promise that the world's burdens shall be removed. He teaches that the secret of life, of happiness, of success is to be found, not by destroying nature, not by overthrowing natural law, but by rising morally superior to difficulty, disappointment, disease, and death. The world of salvation is not an enchanted realm, but a spiritualized natural one.

The religion of Jesus springs from and is controlled by an appreciation on his part of God's Fatherliness. He everywhere takes for granted the existence of the Father, and is chiefly concerned with setting forth His nature as the God over all. He avoids the metaphysical terminology, and makes use of the ethical in his preaching. The

problem of reality was to him intensely moral. Personal relationships were supreme. So that religion rather than philosophy characterizes his utterances. We cannot imagine Jesus indulging in the barren disputes of the schoolmen. Salvation was not for him a problem in logic, but one of will and motive. God existed, not as postulate of reason, but as a pulsating heart of love.[1]

The Fatherliness of God is the thought which interprets all the facts of the life and teaching of Jesus. This explains the personal life of intimate communion, fellowship, and dependence, enjoined upon his disciples, no less than his own source of power and joy. Indeed, to bring his disciples and through them all men to see, to believe, to appreciate the fact that God loves as a holy Father, that human life is worthy when lived with this as a ruling motive, may be said to be the mission of Jesus to the world. In other words, to re-live God's life on earth constituted the sum total of his work, and likewise the realization of that same sort of life among men was the supreme end of true religion.

Thus the energy, the deeds, the thought, the prayer, the devotion, and sacrifice of Jesus' life were intended to save men. He was willing to go to the extreme depth of suffering if thereby the world could be won to filial and fraternal service. The cross in which the revelation of Jesus finds its climax is luminous with divine light. The death of the Son of Man shows how far man will go in rebellion against God. Sin will put to death him who dies to save from sin. Injustice, ingratitude, infamy never had so clearly portrayed its utter depravity as in the sufferings of the Christ. But this is not all. There is revealed also in this momentous event how far God will go in the rescue of man from sin. The suffering Son of Man is a picture of divine love bearing the weight, the penalty of man's transgression. God did not begin to be forgiving when these sufferings were completed, nor did He begin to work for man's redemption on the occasion of the incarnation. What He was eternally, the holy-loving Father, He was exhibited to be in the historic career of Jesus. The exhibition was not for the sake of changing God's nature, but for the sake of winning back the wayward race of man.

Jesus never lost sight of the fact that God is supreme. His life was one of absolute dependence. His will was to do the will of Him. God was Father. He was as Son the Son of Man. The Kingdom of God was His will realized in human affairs. So completely was he

[1] The new impression thus made on the world, of the character of God, is one of the preeminent facts of history. Storrs, *Divine Origin of Christianity*, p. 54.

submissive to this conception that his life was made up of deeds and words, not his own, but inspired from on high. God's will was not an external power before which Jesus bowed, but it was an inward principle constantly actuating him. So perfectly were these deeds and thoughts in accord with the Father's purposes and acts that without egotism he could say: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

A new appraisal of man accompanied this idea of Fatherliness. In the light of this conception of God man assumed the dignity of sonship. Jesus saw beneath the ruins of sin the remnants of worthy manhood. He adjusted his own life to the process of saving the world, because he recognized that all the forces at play in human life were remedial. Man was a son, but a lost son. Sin had so warped his nature that he scarcely could be called a child of God. His will was too perverse to enjoy God's blessing. His soul was being starved with the husks of vain delights. Even so, man was worth saving. The love of God is universal. The evil and the good enjoy God's blessing. More than this, salvation is the one dominating passion of the Divine heart. Man's value is infinite because of this love. Not what he is, but what he may become, constitutes the reality of man.

It is worthy of note that Jesus constructed no theory of moral depravity. The fact of sin needed no argument to verify it. It was as evident to his moral perception as the shining of the midday sun to the eye of sense. The philosophical explanation of the origin of evil caused him no concern. Sin could not be eliminated from the problem of man's best interests. It was a part of man's nature. The problem of overcoming evil was not to be simplified by logical deductions. There was only one remedy, repentance and forgiveness. God was ever ready to receive the repentant one; and to bring mankind into a state of soul so that forgiveness would be a blessing was the task Jesus set before him. Salvation was possible for all who would believe in him. That belief consisted in accepting the mercy of God by submission of will. The appeal to man was this all-conquering love, and this alone could give the true motive in conversion.

Jesus as the servant of God, working to this end, was the Messiah of promise. This was not an official position, but first of all an opportunity to save. The joy set before him was the redemption of the world. He desired no higher place than that of the elder brother of the household of faith. He sought no special favor, enjoyed no special privilege, desired relief from no burden, but gladly fulfilled his Gospel,

that whosoever shall lose his life the same shall find it. To be the Messiah involved loneliness, misery, want, neglect, ingratitude, and death. Even this he welcomed as being the will of God. He never questioned, as did ancient prophets: Why do the righteous suffer? To suffer was the privilege, the opportunity, of those who would serve God and man. In obedience to this great moral law he bore the rejection of man. He willingly died to prove his doctrine true. This was the Messiah's work.

A new epoch in religion was thus created. The true King of righteousness laid anew the foundation of the Kingdom of righteousness. Prophet's word and God's commands were fulfilled indeed. Because of this service to man he has become man's Lord. He has vindicated his claim of superior power by his revelation of the way to God, the truth of God, and the life in God. This Kingdom is the end for which all things in heaven and earth exist. It is the realm of holy-love to God and man. Space and time cannot measure its boundaries. It is an eternal realm. Here the world's standards are reversed. Judgments of greatness, glory, and success in the Kingdom are made in the light of the character of Him whose life permeates the whole. The despised of earth is exalted, the proud is brought low.

Thus we have discovered the essence of Jesus' religion. It consists, not in dogma or ceremonial observances, but in a spirit of filial and fraternal love. Here is its source. The person is greater far than his precept. No construction of human thought can possibly contain the sum total of this revelation. Its height, its depth, its length, its breadth are beyond the limitation of reason to explain. We may gather something of its meaning within the circle of our own experience when we believe and live its truth, but that circle is but a fragmentary portion of the infinite compass of its reality. Our systems of thought reduce this revelation to the level of imperfect reason. Our institutions and organizations for the betterment of man can but embody imperfectly the motive of his mission.

He who thus by a life of loving sacrifice disenthralled mankind from the bondage of traditionalism, idolatry, and sin, lived in an obscure corner of the Roman Empire, and died unnoticed by the Emperor. He was put to death in the very beginning of his career. He succeeded during two years of active ministry in gathering about him a few followers, most of whom were unlettered men, ignorant of the great world which lay beyond the borders of their province. They had been brought under the transforming power of a divine life, and the result, though

gradual, was at length seen in their absolute devotion to the same mission of their Master. They became eloquent in proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation. 'Tis true they were most grievously disappointed at his death, but after the resurrection to them he was unquestionably the Messiah. Tears were dried, hopes revived, faith strengthened in the living Christ. They had seen the very heart of God in the life, character, and work of their Lord. Jesus was the Son of God. Deity was revealed as a loving Saviour. Religion was something other than a perfunctory service. Duty was not the barren product of precept, but was a vital appreciation of a worthy example. Destiny was determined, not by arbitrary decree, but by quality of soul life produced in man by the saving principle of loving obedience to the will of the Father. Such was the religion of Jesus in the lives of his first followers.

II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEOLOGY.

Christianity has had a career during these nineteen centuries in which its original character has undergone many transformations. Could it have been otherwise? We must never forget that the soil itself in which this new life took root furnished in part the conditions of its growth. The revelation was perfect, viewing it from the standpoint of him who gave it. There was nothing wanting in his life, nothing in his words. As perfectly as a life conditioned by human limitations could express it, as fully as human language could formulate and convey divine thought, this revelation was made. Yet we may find in the words of his disciples and later adherents to his cause evidences of that imperfection to which human beings are always liable. Conditions of life, mental habit, customs, disposition, political and social ideals, old forms of worship, were some of the influences which shaped the early destiny of Christianity.

The point of supreme interest in a study of the conditions surrounding the early Christians is the development of theological opinion. The spiritual inspiration of Jesus and his religious utterances were too lofty and profound for even the disciples to understand. What wonder, then, that those less fortunate, those who never came into immediate contact with him, those who, like the Greeks and Romans, were born in an altogether different intellectual atmosphere, who by very nature and training could not appreciate the difference between a truth for reason and a truth for life, that they should in taking up into their own lives this new faith not only be transformed by it, but in turn should

transform the form at least of that religion itself? What we might expect was actually done.[1]

The human mind is not capable of receiving spiritual truth without relating it to its rational comprehension. Also it must be noted that every fact to be communicated must be put into the form of rational ideas. Likewise the apprehension of any truth is made by means of that already known. And as another reason why the religion of Jesus was taken up in the form of dogmatic statement it must be remembered that Christianity was very soon called upon to make a defense of its claim to authority, in the most cultured and philosophical centres of the world. Thus Christian theology was necessitated as the result of man's effort to explain the person and work of Jesus the Son of God.

The recasting of religion into dogmatics was not made without serious loss to religion itself. When scientific explanation became the chief centre of interest in the thought of the early Christians, the inspiration of the Gospel message of love and forgiveness in large measure died out. When religion sought a reconciliation with philosophy, faith was made a victim to the demands of reason, and religious dogma was the result. Of course, the Church Fathers were men of mighty intellectual power. Why, then, did they lack the spiritual potency of the Apostles? The answer may be truthfully made that it was not that they were less qualified to possess religious life, nor that they were less noble by nature, but because they found themselves confronted with the problem of relating the new religion with the old philosophy, which form of thought was not capable of expressing the deepest significance of Christian faith.

With the loss of the power of religion, as had been expressed in the lives of the Apostles, came a gain in giving Christianity currency among the educated people of Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, and northern Africa. As far as human efforts were concerned, this first period of the development of theology practically insured the triumph of the Christian religion. There was undoubtedly a providential guiding of this movement, but, since we have outgrown the conditions of life and the forms of thought of that time, it would be reasonable to suppose that we had also outgrown its dogma.

To rationalize the religion of Jesus has been the aim of the noblest minds in the Church. The facts of revelation, the experiences of

[1] "It was quite impossible to avert attempts to transform this religious content, which was originally apprehended only in living presentiment, into a series of communicable propositions." — Lotze, *Philosophy of Religion*, translated by Ladd, p. 43.

faith, the process of salvation, the meaning of death, and the instinct of immortality are some of the religious data which challenge observation, classification, and explanation. Faith, which is the medium of revelation and the condition of spiritual illumination, leads to knowledge as the deeper experiences of the soul are reflected into the mental categories, and as the attitudes of will become concrete events in time and space. It is the very nature of religion to embody itself in finite forms. While primarily it belongs to the life eternal, and, in fact, refuses to exhaust itself in temporal conditions, nevertheless its objectification in human thought and conduct makes possible the definition of its meaning. Religion exists for life, but in producing life it expresses its essence, in part at least, in creed and church organization. To bring the phenomena of religion into the form of rational comprehension has been the task of theologians.

From this it is evident that Christian dogma is the result of two distinct factors, the one material and the other formal. The religion of Jesus, considered as his own attitude of will toward God, and all that wealth of spirit with which he blessed the world, constituted the former; the habit of mind, the accepted philosophy, the method of reasoning of the theologians, constituted the latter. As dogma is an objective construction of religion, both the material and formal factors were necessary. It needs to be said, however, that philosophy is not mere form of thought, but has its own content as well, indeed cannot be separated from its content. What more natural than to suppose, if the religion of Jesus was to undergo scientific formulation in the hands of Christian philosophers, there would be grave danger of unconscious incorporation of a truth that was not distinctly religious, nay, that in its expression was somewhat untrue to the spirit of revelation? It is not an easy task to co-ordinate religion with logic. As we trace the development of thought in the Church, noting the controversies of giant minds, Christians all in heart experience, standing at the very opposite poles in logical interpretation of that experience, as we look into our own minds and see the inner conflict of reason and faith, we can better appreciate the difficulties of theology, and can more willingly assume the attitude of charity, and even gratitude, toward those who have not succeeded in establishing dogma as a finality.

The origin of Christian theology is thus seen to have resulted from the conditions of life and thought which prevailed in the centres where Christianity was first planted. The historical development of

dogma has ever been in obedience to the law of its origin. Every theologian has brought to his task the philosophy to which he was devoted. Whether it is the traditional theology of Augustine and Calvin, or the more modern forms of religious thought in what is known as "new theology," it all has been the result of attempts to rationalize or bring into logical sequence the facts of Christian belief. Philosophy, realistic or idealistic, dualistic or monistic, pantheistic or theistic, has ever and will ever give theology its form. If in the past the religion of Jesus has been differently interpreted, according to the philosophical standpoints of the various theologians, so we may expect a difference in theological systems as long as these different philosophies exist. Theology cannot be final until philosophy is.[1]

It is necessary at this point to define more fully the scientific labors of those who have fashioned for us our accepted forms of Christian doctrine.

As a science theology seeks to gather, arrange, classify, correlate, and interpret the data which are furnished in religious experience. It is a science of religion which explains the processes of spirit from the standpoint of the nature of God. Science is the experience of man organized in thought. In the claim of theology that it is a science of religion it professes to be the exhibition of religious facts in their innermost nature and causal connection. The range of observation in the preliminary work of classification may to the physicist seem too broad. He may say the same of biology. Every science is, in a sense, arbitrary. Its field is of its own choosing, and the conclusions are conclusions of knowledge. What reality is beyond the range of thought, science never attempts to explain. So theology is a science, is the body of knowledge resulting from scientific analysis of religious experience. It seeks to explain the universal impulses of the heart toward God, the aspirations and desires of the ethical and social

[1] Speaking of the rise and development of Christian dogma, the late Mr. Hatch, in the *Hibbert Lectures*, 1888, p. 330, said: "It began by being (1) a simple trust in God; then followed (2) a simple expansion of that truth into the assent of the proposition that God is good, and (3) a simple acceptance of the proposition that Jesus Christ was His Son; then (4) came in the definition of terms, and each definition of terms involved a new theory; finally (5) the theories were gathered together into systems, and the martyrs and witnesses of Christ died for their faith, not outside, but inside, the Christian sphere; and instead of a world of Christian belief which resembled the world of actual fact in the sublime unsymmetry of its foliage, and the deep harmony of its discords, there prevailed the most fatal assumption of all, that the symmetry of a system is the test of its truth and a proof thereof."

nature of man, the mysterious depths of feeling, the sense of sin and guilt, the call to duty, the desire for the good, the true, and the beautiful. Here, as in natural science, the function of an hypothesis is manifest. Hypotheses are first held in the mind for testing facts, and in turn being tested by them. Success in theology, as in all science, depends on the range of observation and the nature of the ruling hypothesis which explains the phenomena.

The ruling conception in theology is the idea of God. Philosophy ends with a discovery of the Absolute, but with a definite knowledge of the nature of Deity theology begins. It is the formative idea throughout the whole process of religious thought. Theologies differ not so much in recognition of religious phenomena as in conceiving the character of God. So true is this that any theological system may be tested at this point as at no other. It is always the major premise of the theological syllogism. A misconception here renders the whole argument invalid.

Christian theology is distinguished from the theology of any other religion by the fact that Jesus is the means by which the true conception of God is revealed to man. It is axiomatic to the Christian that Jesus is the adequate revelation of Deity. He opens the door into the world beyond human speculation, and in his own life gives mankind a vision of the Eternal. This claim, that the idea of God discoverable in the consciousness of Jesus is absolute truth, rests on the fact, attested by all who have come into close relationship with him, that here is the hypothesis which interprets all religious experience of whatsoever sort. The claim is that Jesus has realized in himself the idea of God which will explain the religious impulse of the race, awaken in the individual the most profound love and worship, lead him forth to noblest moral achievement, explain the movements of history, reveal the end toward which the universe moves, correlate into one harmonious system of thought the hopes, the pains, the joys of the human heart, and furnish man with the help which he needs to accomplish his worthy destiny.[1]

[1] "Of anything more perfect than the meek yet majestic Jesus no heart can ever dream. And accordingly ever since he visited our earth with blessing the soul of Christendom has worshipped a God resembling him, a God of whom he was the image and impersonation, and therefore not the God of which philosophy dreams. . . . , but the Infinite Spirit so holy, so affectionate, who passes no wounds of sorrow by, who stills the winds and waves of terror to the perishing who call unto him in faith, who stops the processes of our grief and bids bereaved affection weep no more, but wait upon the will that even the dead obey."—Martineau, *Studies in Christianity*, p. 194.

The chief reason why theology has had such a course of development as the history of the Church reveals lies in the fact that the fundamental idea of God has to a greater or less degree been drawn from current philosophy rather than from the consciousness of Jesus. Theologies of the past are not so untrue in logical procedure as they are in presuppositions covering the nature of God. From the days of the Church Fathers until now, philosophical conceptions of the Absolute have in a measure taken the place of Jesus' idea of God. But there has been a progress in philosophy from the transcendent idealism of the Neo-Platonists to the modern conception of divine immanence, and corresponding to this has been a progress in theology, especially as in later days the significance of the historical Christ has been more fully realized.

Yes, we have been slow to grasp the idea of God which governed the life of the Son of Man. No Church, no creed, no system of theology has yet exhausted that conception. He who has unfolded his matchless personality in the successive epochs of history, he who has furnished inspiration to countless thousands amid struggle, defeat, despair, and conquest, still says to man: "I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." The Church is yet in its infancy. The last word in Christian thought has not yet been said. The standards of opinion are being modified. The progress of science is effecting modifications in religion. New light is breaking upon civilization. New and higher points of view are being granted thinking men. Jesus as an historical character is better known to us than to any age that has preceded this. The significance of the Gospel is more deeply felt than ever before. All this points to the fact that we are yet to more fully understand what Jesus meant when he called God "Father," and gave his life to prove the reality of his conception.

This, then, is the condition of progress in theology. We acknowledge the intimate relation between philosophy and theology, but philosophy can never give by means of speculation a conception of God which will be adequate for religious needs. Philosophy will aid in opening the wide realm of observation in which religious data are discovered, and, more, it will materially affect the lens of observation itself. Philosophy will, in addition to all this, assist in gathering correct facts in connection with the life of Jesus. It will also, aided by the Spirit, gradually open to human view the deeper meaning of the Scripture. Facts of history will be separated from facts of fancy, and real events will be scientifically correlated into genuine biography.

Even so, nothing that human thought can devise or human reason construct will supersede or in any way take the place of the revelation made in that inexhaustible fountain of spiritual light and life, the consciousness of the Son of Man. The greatest discoveries for theology are to be made in the realm of religion.

The idea of God has been and is to be the regulative conception in theology. To understand the present theological systems we need to examine their origin and trace their development; to estimate their worth we must form from an inductive study of Jesus' life a norm of criticism, and in the light of such a standard test this science. The purpose of the succeeding chapters is to sketch in outline the different conceptions of God which have dominated the theologians of the past, and to prepare the way for a more constructive work in theological science.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GREEK TYPE OF THEOLOGY.

The early Church was organized in a time of philosophical speculation and controversy. It is therefore not surprising to find the leaders of this new movement engaged in attempts to make good the claim of Christianity to be a final system of belief. To effectually transplant this new faith in the sceptical centres of Grecian and Roman life, and for converts to maintain the grounds of their religious experience by a defense based on thoroughgoing logic, was a task not easily accomplished. But this very condition proved to be the occasion for the rise of Christian theology. The age of apology was the birth-time of dogma.

This crisis in the development of Christianity was providential. The spirit of rational inquiry had exhausted itself in a vain attempt to analyze the ground of things. Metaphysics as a field for thought could be maintained only by fertilizing it with the specific content of revelation. Greek thought had passed out of the realm of phenomena to that of the Absolute. But the Absolute was so void of meaning, such an empty abstraction, that academic and sensational scepticism soon proved that such a conception had no value for life, and must therefore be abandoned. The Christian idea of God, who is a being of supremest ethical motive, an idea so vital as to give evidence of its reality in the transformed lives of those who come under its power, was the salvation of metaphysics. By this revelation the Absolute was

clothed in a living light, and the world was given a new significance. Henceforth philosophy must interpret religion, and religion must give philosophy its aim.

It could not be expected that the new metaphysics would be altogether free from assumptions somewhat untrue to the spirit of revelation. The old habit of speculation carried with it many of the old ideas. Ethical values, which revelation emphasized, must be categorized into concepts of being and power. This process gave the Christian religion a career in thought, the development of doctrine and creed, in which may be traced the clear evidence of philosophical presuppositions. Greek, Latin, Scholastic, and modern ideas of God, these formative conceptions which differentiate dogma into periods and schools, are derived from philosophy itself, in great measure independent of revelation. If the fact is admitted, does it follow that the whole movement has been futile? To those who demand a form of thought which shall be final in all matters pertaining to faith the history of theology must be most disappointing. The impatience of such minds is a serious hin drance to genuine progress. To those who look for clearer statements in dogma, and believe that eventually philosophical error will be outlived, the past is not futile, even though it gives but imperfect formulations of truth. The promise of a better day is read in the faithful endeavors of philosophy to satisfy the demands of reason. He who can afford to wait, and at the same time has courage to labor on, will see at length the bright shining of the truth, in which the meaning of religion shall be perfectly revealed.

After the Macedonian conquest the intellectual life of Greece was centred in Alexandria. Here also Judaism found a home and a wide circle of influence. As the East and the West were thus brought face to face, revelation and science met on common ground and commingled. In this way a preparation was made for the philosophical interpretation of the Christian revelation. Philo, the greatest of Jewish philosophers, was the first to make a scientific formulation of the truth of Jewish revelation and Greek thought. He failed to satisfactorily adjust the two because of his idealism and allegory. Neo-Platonism was no better. In this system God and the world were hopelessly separated. But when Christianity, in the person of Pantenæus, made a philosophical statement of the truth which answers the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" men of acute learning were ready to accept the new belief. Here, then, in the second and third centuries, where Grecian art and science flourished, the converts to Christianity sought to reconcile

existing culture with faith, and to permeate the religion of Jesus with the best literary and scientific spirit. In the so-called Catechetical school of Alexandria, by the side of the best university of the time, the theology of the Christian religion was born.[1]

I. CLEMENT.
(150–217.)

Clement of Alexandria has justly been called the father of Greek theology.[2] According to the best evidence obtainable he was born in Athens in 150 A. D., and was educated under Hellenic teachers. To the work of making a scientific statement of Christian truth he brought the culture and knowledge which his Greek training had given him. Educated among the prevailing tendencies of philosophical eclecticism, he naturally imbibed something from the Stoic, Platonic, and Philonic philosophies, and as well owed something to the influence of Gnosticism.

Perhaps this fact of Grecian culture is responsible for the broad view which he held of revelation. Pre-Christian conceptions of God were to him partial truths. In this he agreed with Justin Martyr, who was most emphatic in affirming that Greek philosophy was a part of God's revelation. Clement held to the view that revelation was fundamentally an illumination of soul which enables the individual to see the truth. God, who had given a covenant to the Israelites and a new covenant to the Apostles through Jesus, was also the giver of Greek philosophy to the Greeks which to them was a means of righteousness.[3]

The theology of Clement is worked out from the standpoint of divine immanence. The current philosophy of his day emphasized in the extreme God's transcendence. So far was the Infinite removed from the affairs of the world that practically man is lost, hopelessly lost. None of the early Christian philosophers questioned the fact of man's estrangement from the Father, but to Clement's credit be it said he rescued human thought from this gulf of despair by making

[1] "It was the birthplace of Christian theology in the proper sense, as it sprang from the inward impulse of the mind thirsting after scientific knowledge, and partly from an outwardly directed apologetic interest to defend the doctrines of the Church against philosophically educated Greeks and against Gnostics."—Neander.

[2] Bishop Kaye, *Clement of Alexandria.*

[3] See *Strom.*, Bk. 6:5, 8. "Hellenic philosophy has torn off a fragment of eternal truth," 1:13.

clear the idea that this separation is ethical in its nature, and that God is immediately related to man by His immanent spirit, that man is endowed with spiritual parts akin to the divine, that human life is an education under the instruction of God, that the Father by the Son is reconciling the world unto Himself.

As to the general idea common among Neo-Platonists that God is unapproachable, being infinite in nature, Clement accepted it in part, but offset this ancient agnosticism by making clear the truth that He is knowable through the Son. In the Son God declares Himself.[1] The Logos is the speaking and the spoken word. He comes to every man. He is in everything. Through the Logos, the Son, the finite mind may apprehend God.

So emphatic are the statements made by Clement in regard to the indwelling of the Deity through the Son that the fact of distinctions in the Trinity, so important to later theologians, is in his thought somewhat obscured. The question of equality between the Son and the Father gave rise later to the two schools of thought, the Arian and the Athanasian. It is not at all improbable that in Clement's own mind both phases of truth were unified. The Father is not without the Son, the Son is not without the Father. The Son as the spoken word of the Father is also the speaking voice in the world.

Out of this fundamental idea of God's immanence grows naturally the specific doctrine of the Incarnation. God who is wisdom and love, ever active in the world, having made man in His image, reveals Himself through man, who ideally is a lively and congenial organ for His self-expression. Jesus is the normal man, the centre of humanity. The Logos and Jesus of Nazareth are one. His historical career was a mode of his life. He had been in the world from the beginning, as the inspiration of all good. All spiritual life, whether in Jew, Greek, or heathen, owed its existence to him.[2] In the fulness of time he appeared, and intensified his own work of salvation. Mankind are not foreigners, but kinsmen to him. He came to his own. The work of the Incarnation was historical in fact, but was eternal in idea.

To sum up, then, Clement's contribution to the theology of the Church, we note four dominant conceptions, namely, the fundamental idea of divine immanence, the doctrine of universal revelation, the

[1] See *Strom.*, 5:3; 7:1; *Pæd.*, 1:7. The Father is the Creator, the Son is the ideal world; the Son is the Logos who enlightens man, and the Son schematizes the essence of Deity.

[2] See *Pæd.*, 1:6; 3:1.

native sonship of man, the historical coming of the Son into the world. In this masterly presentation of religious truth are the unmistakable evidences of the Gospel revelation. Clement lived so close to the fountain of inspiration in his personal experience that his work is a lasting memorial of a great heart controlled and directed by a great mind. His idea of God was undoubtedly inspired by Jesus' conception of the Father.

II. ORIGEN.

(185–253.)

In a true sense the work of Clement was preparatory. It remained for Origen, his pupil and successor in the school of Alexandria, to complete more scientifically what he had begun. Origen has the honor of being the first theologian to work out a full, systematic treatise, beginning with the idea of God and covering the whole realm of the creeds of a later day.[1]

The whole system thus wrought out is permeated with Neo-Platonic thought. With him, however, instead of conceiving spirit and matter, God and the world, as hopelessly separated, he posited an ideal dualism of God and fallen spirits, the antagonism of the infinite and finite will. He went so far as to docetize the material world, and spoke of its reality as though it consisted in a spiritual functioning rather than in its objective existence, as such. The real world is a world of spirit, and is eternal. God begets the eternal Son, the Logos, as the sum total of his world thoughts (ἰδέα ἰδεῶν), and through him creates the

[1] Redepenning, as quoted in Ueberweg's *History of Philosophy*, p. 316, furnishes the following outline of Origen's theology: "At the commencement is placed the doctrine of God, the eternal source of all existence, as point of departure for an exposition in which the knowledge of the essence of God, and of the unfolding of that essence, leads us to the eternal in the world, namely, the created spirits whose fall first occasioned the creation of the coarser material world. In the second book we set foot on earth as it now is. We see it arising out of ante-mundane, though not absolutely eternal matter in time, in which it is to lead its changing existence until the restoration of the fallen spirits. Into the world comes the Son of God, sent by the God of the Old Testament, who is no other than the Father of Jesus Christ. We hear of the incarnation of the Son, of the Holy Spirit as he goes forth from the Son to enter into the hearts of men, of the psychical in man in distinction from the purely spiritual, of the purification and restoration of the psychical in him by judgment and punishment, and of eternal salvation. . . . The freedom and the process by which man becomes free are described in the third book. The fourth book is distinct from the rest, and independent as containing the doctrine in which that of the preceding book rests, namely, the revelation made in Holy Scripture." For the doctrine of God as determining Origen's thought see *Joann.*, T. 10 : 178.

free spirits which surround His throne. Those who remain obedient are forever blessed. Those who disobey are cast down into the world of matter created for the purpose of giving such beings a career of discipline. The reality of all bodies is the ever-changing idea within them. The soul exists eternally.

Origen's conception of God as Spirit is professedly drawn from the words of Jesus, "God is spirit," and the declaration of the author of the Fourth Gospel, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."[1] He is the fountain of all reality, infinite mind, streaming forth as the light of intelligence, indivisible, in whom there is no greater, no less, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, the abiding, changeless ground of all reality.[2] Human language is too limited to express His greatness. He is incomprehensible (*inæstimabilis*) in the grandeur of His character, yet He is known to be long-suffering, merciful, and loving.[3]

God is not alone in the majesty of His eternal habitation. The Logos, the only begotten, the Wisdom of the Scripture, the one whom Paul declares to be the power of God, he is the Son by whom the worlds were made and are upheld. This is Jesus, born among men for the salvation of man. He in his eternal reality is an hypostasis of Godhead. This is not an event in time, for God is eternally Father-Son. The will of God the Father is the will of the Son, and they in essence are one.[4] Even so, there is a distinction of persons in God, θεὸς and ὁ θεὸς. The Father is the only source of being, αὐτό-θεὸς, ὁ μέγιστος ἐπὶ πᾶς θεὸς.[5] To the Father humanity lifts up its voice in prayer; the Son is subordinate in all things.

Is the Logos a creature if thus subordinated to the Father? In the finite world, where space relations control existence, division always results in lessening the thing divided. Not so in the realm of spirit. When a teacher has imparted instruction, his own knowledge is not thereby diminished. It is likewise with goodness, love, and wisdom; to impart them is to retain them, and to receive them is to receive them in full possession. God, being by nature spirit, could also duplicate Himself without suffering any division or lessening. In the Son appears the fulness of God, but the Father is alone the source of being. While the communicable attributes, namely, His spiritual perfections, are in the Son, absoluteness belongs to the Father.

[1] See *De Prin.*, 1 : 1.

[2] This highly speculative idea of God is set forth in *De Prin.*, 1 : 2.

[3] See *Hom.*, 6 : 6. [4] *De Prin.*, 1 : 2 *seq.* [5] *Celsus*, 8 : 14.

From this exposition of the doctrine of God both Arians and their opponents, as also from the doctrine of Clement, derived authority for their contradictory systems of thought. Even if, as Origen says, the Logos is eternally begotten of God, he is none the less a creature. If, on the other hand, he is a person original in God-head, this person is only an activity of God. Around this somewhat confused part of Origen's doctrine waged the controversy in which the conception of the Trinity was clearly defined for theological science. The question thus involved was the battle-ground in theological dispute for many years Nor was it a trivial question. Jesus made claims to a unique relation to the Father. He was the essence of Deity made real to man for his salvation. He had accomplished the salvation of men. Who is he? Is he a begotten or created being? Is he a manifestation of Deity? Is he an orginal part of the God-head? In answering these questions the person of Jesus was lifted out of its historical connections into the realm of metaphysics. The victorious party in this controversy gave orthodoxy its final stamp.

III. ATHANASIUS.

(296–373.)

An age of conflict, doubt, and inquiry, an age of councils and primitive creeds, gave birth to staunch defenders of the truth. The crisis in which Christian thought was being fashioned was the occasion for the rise into prominence of the Alexandrian deacon, Athanasius, one, if not the chief, of those who sought to keep the doctrine of God true to the revelation made in Jesus. He, too, was a Greek by birth and education. Possessing keen philosophical insight, capacity for prolonged and profound reflection, coupled with masterly ability in commanding his mental resources, he was fitted to champion the cause of Christianity in this perilous hour.

As already stated, the critical question was the doctrine of God. Is He the abstract Deity incapable of movement within Himself, the absolute and eternal Being, transcendent unity, or is He a God of living, active love, and will, who changes not in essence, but suffers within Himself eternal distinctions of person? The former position was championed by Arius, the latter by Athanasius.

The view of Arius in regard to the Son of God is very explicit, lacking the vagueness so characteristic of Origen and Clement. When God would create a world, He first creates a Son, who is His perfect work.[1] By this act the only begotten is made a being ἄτρεπον καὶ

[1] *Epistle to Alexander.*

ἀναλλοίωτον. His position among creatures is thus unique. He is neither God nor man. The Son is the nexus of the divine and human.

The teaching of Athanasius was in direct opposition to this view. His chief works, λόγος κατα Ελλήνων and περὶ της ενανθρωπήσεως τοῦ λόγου, were not, however, written to oppose Arius.[1] To him God was the maker of the universe, although He needs nothing but Himself for His completeness. He is incorporeal, invisible save to the eye of spirit. He is immanent in the universe, sustaining the world by His power, and constituting it by harmonious law. Creation, Providence, and Redemption, all reveal His love. His name is Father-Son-Holy Spirit.

Man was created in the image of the Son, which proves the ground for the special interest which Deity takes in the race. Being thus organically related to the world as its essential law and life, he, without any change in himself, may come into the world by any special acts of incarnation. For the purpose of restoring the image which naturally belongs to man, and which he lost by sin, he, the Son, takes upon himself the condition of earthly human existence. He could re-create, because he created. The Word became flesh, and the power of sin was destroyed. Death now is the transition into a better condition of life.[2]

It is this soteriological idea which chiefly engages attention in reviewing the doctrine of Athanasius. He was especially emphatic in setting forth the conception of God, not in His being, as such, but the being of God in relation to man, as furnishing the ground of salvation through Christ. He seemed to strike at the very centre of revelation, and to this and from this his thought constantly moved. This practical theology is summed up in the word — salvation. In thus working out the problem of God's activity in saving mankind he also clearly defined for the Church the doctrine of the Trinity which became eventually the accepted view.

Thus Greek thought in the Alexandrian Church was governed by the dominant conception of God's immanence. The subtle penetrations of these theologians into the mysteries of metaphysics were inspired by the matchless power of the personality of Jesus, and directed by the culture and discipline of current philosophy. The great conquering truth revealed in the Gospel that God is love, and light, and

[1] So Dorner states in *Person of Christ*, Div. II, Vol. 1 : 248.

[2] See *De Incar.*, 6.

life, was by these masters given a setting the value of which our own day is just beginning to realize. When we go back to the very birthplace of theology we find this conception of divine immanence as a potent factor in its formulation. And this going back to Greek thought in theology is but what we do in all science, literature, and art. What the noblest had striven for, what the most poetic had dreamed, namely, the divine and the human in intimate relation, was revealed in Jesus, and construed to thought by these Alexandrian teachers. The so-called "new theology" is a revival in modern terminology of the oldest Christian ideas. This is perhaps better seen in the correlative Alexandrian doctrine of man's inherent likeness to and organic oneness with God in the Son.[1] Man was worthy of redemption; nay, the love of God for His own compelled the coming of the Son on the mission of salvation. The Son came into no foreign country, but into the work of his own hands, and to his own people. His coming and his work was not a scheme either commercial or legal; it was fraternal and filial. This doctrine of incarnation was an answer to the significant question implied in the dying words of Plotinus: "I am striving to bring the God within me into harmony with the God in the universe."

CHAPTER V.

THE LATIN TYPE OF THEOLOGY.

Not even the influence of Grecian thought could suppress the characteristic Roman spirit which began to assert itself as a moulding force in Christianity as early as the second century. The forensic trend of the Roman mind which had shaped the destiny of the Empire was sufficient to effect a legal formulation of the religion of Jesus, and to give western theology an impetus the significance and power of which are more fully seen in modern Calvinism. In the hands of the eminent Tertullian, Hyppolytus, Cyprian, Ambrose, and Augustine, the plastic truth of the revelation was cast in a political mould, and the foundation of Catholicism was securely laid. These men were jurists of high rank, and the new religion offered a rare opportunity for the display of their talent.[2]

[1] Maine in *Ancient Law*, p. 342, says: "The Greek theologians regarded the image of God in man as an inalienable possession, and therefore regarded God and man as bound together by an organic tie."

[2] Imperial Rome could be satisfied only with an imperial Church; the Church as a democracy was soon lost from view.

I. TERTULLIAN.

(160–240.)

In Tertullian the distinctive Latin type of Christianity was well expressed. Origen the Greek and he stand at the very opposite poles in quality of mind and disposition. The former was idealistic, spiritual, mild, thoughtful, philosophical, logical, and cultured; the latter, realistic, impetuous, juristic, obscure, and abrupt.[1] Tertullian was a good Roman, having a strong will and quick temper, born to conquer and rejoicing in conquest.

He was not only a Roman, he was also a Roman Stoic. The doctrine of universal reason he put in these words: "Reason in fact is a thing of God, inasmuch as there is nothing which God, the maker of all, has not provided, disposed, and ordained by Reason."[2] Not only so, but he was materialistic in thought. To him all existence was corporeal.[3] He carried this idea into the realm of the Absolute. God is universal substance.[4] But all substance is not necessarily alike. God, as the universal substance, is peculiar to Himself. He is body *spiritus*, filling all space, but not capable of division. He is not, however, identified with the world. The world has its own substance (*substantia*). In creation God became individualized as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Son is the universal Reason. All history previous to the birth of Jesus was a preparation for his coming. Indeed, the whole universe is an expression of the will of God as consisting of three persons. These are the functionary centres of all life and thought. All human affairs are obedient to the divine law. God is Judge and Lord.

This juristic idea is further expressed in Tertullian's exposition of the doctrine of sin. Man as a sinner is a criminal standing before the Judge of all. Transgression means penalty. There is, however, one way of escape. The Son has come into the world and offered himself as a sacrifice. God wills that everyone who repents and believes on the Son shall be saved. This decree is not open to question, nor is man in obeying it to be guided by his reason. He is to yield to the divine will.[5] The will of God is above the natural reason of man. For this

[1] *Cf.* Crutwell, *History of Early Christianity*, p. 512.

[2] See *De Pœnit.*

[3] "All things have one form of simple corporeality which is the essential quality of substance."—*Ad. Hermog.*, 35.

[4] *Ad. Prax.*, 7.

[5] "I hold it audacity to dispute about the good of any divine precept; for it is not the fact that it is good which binds us to obey, but the fact that God enjoins it."

reason the Gospel has been given. No man by searching can find out God. Revelation, if seemingly absurd, is to be accepted as truth. "*Credibile est, quia ineptum est; certum est, quia impossibile est; credo quia absurdum.*" Hence salvation from sin is of grace by blind obedience to the decree of God.

To give permanence to this doctrine of salvation by decree the correlative dogma of the function and power of the Church was conceived. The materialism of the Stoics shaped at this point Tertullian's thought. The Holy Spirit in order to be real must find embodiment in some visible form. The Church organization served as the best agency to preserve the individuality of the Spirit. The Scriptures also must be guarded from assault. What more natural than to suppose that the institution founded by the sacrifice of Peter and Paul was intended to preserve the integrity of the written Word? This dogma was the beginning of ecclesiasticism. Its roots are found in the misconception of the nature of the Divine Being.

Previous to the time of Augustine the strongest advocate of ecclesiasticism was Cyprian, the head of the north-African clergy.[1] He lacked the necessary power of mind for a theologian, but was not wanting in organizing genius. The ambition of his life was to unify the churches scattered abroad in the various provinces of the Roman Empire, and to establish a hierarchy of ecclesiastics. The idea was hinted at by Irenæus. It lies in the very centre of Tertullian's thought. Cyprian realized the idea in a fact — the priestly order centred at Rome. Hence arose the belief that the Church is a divine society administered by men, chosen and consecrated as the representatives of Christ on earth.[2]

When Constantine became the protector and representative of Christianity the character of religious life in the Church began to retrograde. Under the Emperor's influence, aided by current theological opinion, the union of State and Church was effected. No more serious and far-reaching event could have happened in the history of early Christianity. Bishops were appointed by the State in every community of the nation. The imperial institution of Rome — a politico-religious organization — arose in all its might to rule the destinies of men. It is little wonder that in the exercise of political right and might the spirit of religious freedom suffered violence. As the Church

[1] Cyprian died a martyr's death 258.

[2] *Cf.* Tertullian's *De Præscriptione Hereticorum* and Cyprian's *De Unitate Ecclesiæ.*

assumed the function of mediator between God and man, the thought of Jesus that God is Father gradually faded from the consciousness of men. The crystallizing of faith resulted in a dwarfed religious life.

In these days of religious decline the doctrine of God was a matter of grave dispute. The Arian controversy, which in various forms lasted for a century, became the means of defining the orthodox position in respect to the Trinity. The second general council, which convened at Constantinople A. D. 381, restated the creed published by the Council of Nicæa A. D. 325, and thus stamped as heresy the subordination views of the Arian party. The Son was declared to be eternally one and equal with God the Father. The doctrine of the personality of the Holy Spirit was yet to be fully defined.

II. AUGUSTINE.

(396–430.)

The crisis through which the Church passed during the close of the fourth century was the occasion for the rise into prominence of the founder of western theology — Augustine, "the greatest, mightiest, and most influential of all the Fathers." What Paul was to the early Church Augustine became to the Church of the Middle Ages. He saved theology from barren sophism by his clear-cut views of doctrine. So comprehensive was his system of thought that opposing schools in later years quoted him as authority. Today Protestants and Catholics do him homage.

The indulgence of youth left a sting in the breast of Augustine. He ran the whole round of sensuous delight, but found no lasting satisfaction therein. This fact accounts largely for his early adoption of the Manichean philosophy. The Manicheans were eclectic, dualistic, mystical, and ascetic. In their system of thought Augustine saw an explanation of himself. Man and God were infinitely separated; the flesh is the seat of evil; the world is the home of disorder and death. The conversion of Augustine to Christianity did not change his philosophical conceptions, and hence his theology was shaped by Manichean metaphysics.

Particularly is this shown in his doctrine of God. The Infinite exists apart from the world, and acts upon it from without. He is absolutely independent of the physical universe, complete in His spiritual habitation. Everything pertaining to nature and human nature is dependent on Him. Even reason in man is the gift of God's grace. By the light of reason man comes to a knowledge of the Deity.

Judgment and reflection are the source of spiritual wisdom. This thought of God unifies all truth. The omnipotence, omniscience, and goodness of the Supreme constitute His unity, as being, knowing, and willing constitute the unity of the human soul. As the soul is not divided because of its identity, although existing in a threefold aspect as memory, thought, and will, so God is one being existing in self-distinctions of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.[1] God, then, is the supreme will of the universe. The existence of the world, the nature of man, his condition as a sinner, the means of escape from punishment, the end of all things, according to Augustine are to be construed from the standpoint of this all-powerful will of God.

God in creation made that which was good.[2] Yet the world was not made from His essence as an equal, but by a fiat of will to be subordinate in all things.[3] He, then, is omnipresent (*ubique diffusus*) as the ground of all being. To withdraw the support of His will would plunge all things into the void from whence they came. The soul was made a spiritual substance, having the spiritual functions of memory, thought, and will. It is indestructible, the highest created good. Evil is not real in the sense of having eternal essence. The evil of the soul consists in its declension from a higher to a lower state of being. It is a wilful forth-putting of the self and is negative in character. It is lack of being, that is, evil has *causa difficiens*, not *causa efficiens*. Evil is a marring of the good, an infraction of beauty, happiness, and virtue.

The agent in this act of destroying the goodness of life is perfectly free. Certainly, God cannot be charged with destroying His own work. Man, if blameworthy, must have the power of choice. Only so can God justly punish the sinner. Man, however, possesses this freedom of will ideally. Adam, the father of the race, was free to choose the evil or the good. His choice of evil caused the whole world to lapse from its original state of perfection. This was the beginning of evil in the world, and because of Adam's generic relations to the race the human family was smirched with the taint of sin. Now man is no longer free. Inherited sin renders the individual incapable of attaining any good by his own strength, and makes the whole race condemned before God. No one deserves the grace of God. This was forfeited by the ancestor of man. Adam's choice being the cause of

[1] See *De Trin.*, 11 : 18, and *De Lit. Art.*, 2 : 7.

[2] See *De Civ. Dei.*, 11 : 21.

[3] *Ibid.*, 11 : 10.

sin does not, however, relieve man from responsibility. Man was free in Adam. He is to be judged as if he were still free.

In the condition of death which sin entailed upon the race God has gone forth by a free act of His own will and elected a few to be saved. Upon these favorites He bestows a special grace which guarantees their choice of the good and their persisting in the way of righteousness.[1] Thus we find in the world two societies, the people of God and the people of the earth, the one destined to be saved, the other to be eternally lost. The punishment of the sinner sets forth God's justice and thus brings glory to His name; the bestowment of grace upon the saved exhibits His mercy, and this, too, adds a lustre to His glory.

With all due respect to Augustine, whose doctrine is largely responsible for all modern orthodoxy, it is not fair to pass this point without calling attention to some of his more apparent contradictions. In the course of time he broke away somewhat from the metaphysical dualism of the Manicheans, only, however, to posit an ethical dualism equally as hopeless and fatal. He began with the idea of the supremacy of the Divine Will in all created things. From this his idea of predestination is developed most remorselessly. He goes so far as to deny man the power of self-determined action. Man is a machine in the hands of a master. But the future of the individual is determined by his relation to sin or to grace. His relation to sin is determined from the standpoint of the race in Adam; his relation to grace is determined by the independent, unconditioned, self-moved will of God. In both cases man is subject to the will of God, else God is not supreme. Yet man in Adam was free, else responsibility is wanting and punishment is unjust. If Adam was absolutely free, God became absolute by reason of sin, which denies the very fundamental idea of God. If Adam was not free, then God is the cause of evil.

The doctrine of the supremacy of the divine will was seized upon by the Latin Church with great eagerness. This idea was coupled with Tertullian's notion of the Church as the custodian of salvation and the Scriptures. Augustine taught that the Church was supreme in its dictates and that the grace of God was bestowed through it as a divinely ordered channel. Accordingly, through the door of the Church man entered the abode of God. Baptism, administered by the hands of priests of the heavenly commission, washes away original sin, and by the same agency the Holy Spirit is given. This doctrine of

[1] See *De Carr. et Grat.*, 33.

election and salvation according to the divine will through the Church was the leading dogma contributed by Augustine to his followers.

III. A COMPARISON OF LATIN AND GREEK THOUGHT.

Even this brief survey of the development of early Christian thought shows that the human mind cannot rest in purely religious conceptions, but must attempt their vindication at the bar of philosophical inquiry. The human intellect always seeks to construe the experiences and valuations of life into a thought system, and religious belief always tends to crystallize itself into dogma.

This survey shows also that the special form of dogma into which religion is moulded depends not more upon the nature of that truth itself than upon the mental point of view of him who conceives it. Greek and Latin dogma are the result of attempts to make clear and rational the same facts; the meaning of salvation through Jesus Christ, the knowledge of God through Israel, the experience of all men, human history and philosophy—these were the data accepted as truth by all. Moreover, these interpretations, differing as they do at nearly every point, are nevertheless contributions toward that end for which all religious thought exists, namely, a better knowledge of God. These types of thought are partial. Indeed, all thought, however full and systematic it may appear in its day, in the very nature of things is changed by future reflection. Perhaps, as a recent writer says, Greek thought is more interpretative to our age than the Latin,[1] but the latter has given the formula of Christian orthodoxy for fifteen centuries, and cannot be ignored.

The value to be ascribed to these phases of theological development can best be estimated by contrasting their essential elements. The Greek, because of his tendency to speculation, often ignored the practical truth of every-day life in which all philosophy must finally be tested. The Latin, on the other hand, in his habit of dealing with concrete affairs often failed to grasp the spiritual significance, the real ground on which religious verities must ever rest. The one was theological, the other anthropological; the one started with the idea of the Logos, the other with the idea of salvation; the one endeavored to abstract from the nature of the Infinite those elements which relate Him to the finite, the other attempted to see God through anthropomorphic and juristic conceptions, and express religion in terms suited to arouse the emotions of reverence and worship. To the former God was ideally

[1] Allen, *Continuity of Christian Thought*, p. 34.

immanent, to the latter He was really transcendent. To the Greek the truth was clear that man was akin to Deity, to the Latin it was equally certain that man was an alien to God. The one believed salvation came from within, the other thought it came from without. One saw in the world the unfolding of divine beauty and perfection, the other saw the evil consequences of sin, the reign of the Prince of Darkness. To the one human life was an education, to the other a probation.

There was a strong inclination on the part of the Greek theologians to avoid fixing truth in hard and fast dogma; on the contrary, it was the very ambition of the Latins to externalize all spiritual relations in customs, laws, forms, ceremonies, and institutions. To the Greek God's abode is the universe of spirit; ideas of space and time do not belong to Him; He is immanent, manifesting Himself in history and in nature. The deepest reality of the world is spirit. God is the Father of all men, and the Son, the Logos, is Jesus. Jesus is the expression in time of the immanent principle of the universe, the final cause of which is perfected manhood. The Latin theologians, on the contrary, held rigorously to the view that man and God occupied entirely different spheres. The Incarnation was an afterthought in the mind of God, made necessary because of man's sin. Jesus is the expression of divine grace, wisdom, and mercy. He was an actor in the great drama of salvation. The Greek said, "Christ is all and in all;" the Latin said, "Adam lost all."

Notwithstanding the virility of Grecian ideas, and the comprehensive character of Grecian thought, the Latin type of theology prevailed. The reason for this is clear. The Latin interpretation of Christianity gave rise to an imperial Church. Greek life declined in intellectual strength, and became absorbed in the rising intelligence and philosophy of Rome. From this time until the Reformation ecclesiasticism fettered human inquiry. The idea of God was henceforth delivered through the authority of the Church. The ecclesiastical hierarchy gained social and political prestige, but the Church lost the sense and the inspiration of spiritual freedom. The complete triumph of Tertullian's thought plunged the Church into the despair of the Dark Ages.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SCHOLASTIC TYPE OF THEOLOGY.

In vain we look through the period of scholasticism for any evidence of renewed spiritual life in the Church. It was a time of verbal dispute. The only result which attended the expression of the almost

universal passion for logic was a series of barren philosophical formulas. The scholastics probably did not thus consciously prostitute religion, for they were laboring under the mistaken idea that nothing could be true in doctrine or life which did not appear as the result of a syllogism. And, still further, they erred in accepting as final the conception of God wrought out by Augustine instead of beginning their inquiry by ascertaining the conception of God revealed in the consciousness of Jesus.

More specifically, the origin of scholastic thought is intimately associated with the rise into prominence of the idea that revelation possesses fixed historical authority. This, as we have already seen, was a more or less important dogma with Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine. The triumph of the Latin over the Greek type of theology made possible the further development of this idea into the form of an external authority assumed by the Church as the appointed guardian of this precious treasure. Coupled with ecclesiastical victory was also the favorable political condition brought about by the disruption and ruin incident to the invasion of the northern barbarians. The common people cried out for help. The Church came to the rescue, and by its voice of authority compelled obedience from even unconquerable foes. Not only barbarians, but reason also, was made to bow in submission to the ecclesiastical will.

I. ANSELM.

(1033–1109.)

When the Church was sounding forth its notes of warning and instruction, when its authority was being universally recognized, when the priesthood was becoming rich on the gifts of penitent sinners, there appeared another great champion of ecclesiastical power — Anselm, "the Augustinian of his age." He possessed a mind at once broad and clear, an ability to penetrate into the mysteries of faith, and at the same time a heart loving and calm. He marks the beginning of the new development of theology by means of speculation based on thoroughgoing logic. He was both theoretical and practical, rational and mystical. So many-sided were his fundamental philosophical views that Bernard of Clairvaux, the realist, and Abelard, the conceptualist, both take him as their authority in these respects.

The supreme question for this Neo-Augustinian was the all-important one for theology: How may faith be guaranteed in knowledge? He never questioned the validity of the dogmas propounded by the

Church, but attempted to put under them the sure foundation of reason, not, however, in such a way as to leave the impression in the minds of any that reason is primary. His special determining dictum was expressed in his *credo ut intelligam.*

There stood before him in all its formal magnificence the Church, the institution which embodied unquestionably the very truth of God. This presupposition he never questioned, but with all the vigor of his cultured mind he sought to understand its significance, and make clear its claim to universal acceptance. This institution expressed to Anselm two profound facts, the existence of God and the certainty of redemption. These facts are the province of faith. Nevertheless, to substantiate these cardinal truths appeal must be made to the reasoning power of man. Such was the motive which prompted him to write the *Proslogium*, the *Monologium*, and *Cur Deus Homo*—monumental treatises for theology, which have ever since done valiant service in the lives of a certain class of men. There is, however, underlying all the work of this great teacher the fatal assumption that all truth is capable of demonstration, that formal knowledge is the consummation of human experience, that the truth of cognition is fundamental, that thought and existence are one.

In the *Proslogium* we find the first complete statement of the ontological argument. It is an attempt to prove God's existence from the idea of Him in the human mind.[1] Stating the argument briefly: By the word "God" we mean the absolutely perfect Being. There is no person who has not such a conception. Now, it cannot be that the finite intellect is greater than the Being of which it has an idea. This Being (*quo majus cogitore non potest*) must be real, else He would lack the chief element of perfection and would therefore not be the Being already conceived. The content of consciousness (*esse in intellectu*) is also a metaphysical entity (*esse etiam in re*). As anyone can readily see, the real argument in the case is, if God be thought of as the most perfect Being, He must be thought of as existing. The fallacy is apparent. In the argument the fundamental idea of realism is brought to light, namely, that conception and truth are one.[2]

Anselm the theologian is better exhibited in the Christological treatise *Cur Deus Homo.* Nowhere as in this discussion is revealed his

[1] "Thou art so truthful, O Lord my God, that Thou canst not be conceived as non-existent; for if any spirit could conceive something better than Thyself, this creature would rise above the Creator."

[2] Gaunilo, a monk of Marmontiers, a contempory of Anselm, refuted the argument with great emphasis.

conception of God. The central thought of the work is atonement. A more or less vague idea of the work of Jesus in atoning for sin had always possessed the mind of the Church. Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzen, Cyril of Alexandria, Ambrose, and Augustine accepted the fact, but gave it no permanent analysis in dogmatic form. This was a chief contribution of Anselm in the development of theology. He subjected the fact of redemption to the test of reason. If others had conceived of an atonement in which the ransom for man's guilt was paid to Satan, it is to the great credit of Anselm that he repudiated the notion, and considered the death of Jesus as appeasing the justice of God. The guilt of man could not be forgiven until justice was satisfied. God is the absolute ruler. All created beings exist for His glory. Obedience is the condition of life. No act of disobedience can be atoned for by man, for the perfect keeping of God's will is only man's duty. Sin withholds from the Ruler of heaven and earth His just glory. Justice demands the death of a sinner. Only God can atone for this guilt. The love of God sacrifices itself to justice, becomes man in Jesus, dies, and man is redeemed.

The immediate effect of atonement is thus confined to God. The final purpose of it also, for the salvation of man secures God's honor, justice, and glory. But even this great sacrifice of love to justice, instead of making salvation universal, secures it for a mere fraction of the human family. Those who consciously appropriate the merit, the result of Jesus' death, are admitted to the blessings of forgiveness. One would suppose that such a meritorious work as the sacrifice of the Son of God would in sheer justice to him secure the complete salvation of the race; not only so, but salvation thus secured would certainly satisfy the claims of justice on the part of God. However, such is not the case, for salvation is a real state of soul in him who is saved, not a mere external performance. In this limitation of the effect of the atonement is the principal contradiction of Anselm's theology.

A certain feature of the doctrine of atonement was seized upon by ecclesiastics as a means of furthering their designs. With characteristic presumption they appropriated to themselves the duty of guarding the "store of merit," the result of Jesus' sacrificial death, and the privilege of bestowing it according to conditions which they saw fit to impose. This was the beginning of indulgences, which is another evidence of the relation between the idea of God and the religious life of man.

II. ABELARD.

(1079–1142.)

The triumph of ecclesiasticism was not without protest. Among those who resisted the dogmatism of the Church was Abelard, the conceptualist, the rationalist. Realism, with its tendency to pantheism and nominalism, with its sensualism, fell before the sharp sword of his dialectic. They fell, but only to rise again in other forms.

In direct opposition to Anselm, Abelard declared that knowledge precedes faith, that religion in order to be stable must be rational, and particularly the doctrine of atonement, the battle-ground of these two opposing champions, must rest, not upon blind faith in the fact of salvation, but upon a rational understanding of the process of redemption. In other words, the primary question is an ethical one: How does Jesus save?

The solution to this question proposed by Anselm was grounded in the presupposition or belief that the honor of God was the end to be secured at all costs, and that this was achieved by the sacrificial work of Jesus. Abelard, on the other hand, proposes an answer in which belief, as such, occupies a less important place. A concrete study of the means by which salvation becomes a fact in the life of the sinner needs no such assumption of faith. With Anselm he assumes that the individual cannot be justified in his attempts to restore the broken law of God. But God in the person of the Son by identifying Himself with man and suffering in his behalf stirs up in man the true faith of repentance. God is revealed as the benevolent Father whose chief delight and glory is in love. The response in the life of the sinner when touched by the appeal of grace becomes the indissoluble bond of union between God and man, and this is the real ground of forgiveness.[1] The basis of forgiveness in this case is, then, not the meritorious work of Jesus, but the love of God. The atonement is an exhibition of love for the purpose of salvation.

That the general temperament of a theologian shows itself in his system of thought is almost too evident for remark. However, it must

[1] This exposition is based on Ritschl, *History of Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 36. One of the ablest defenders of Anselm's doctrine of atonement, the late Dr. Shedd, in his *History of Christian Doctrine*, Vol. II, p. 287, maintains that Abelard looked at the great question of salvation from a much lower level than that occupied by Anselm. He says in proof of this: "Abelard begins and ends with the benevolence of God." Whether this is a lower level or not depends entirely upon one's point of view. If Jesus is the standard, it certainly is not a lower level, for to Abelard God is Father, while to Anselm He is judge.

be borne in mind, just as in the case of Augustine, experience had much to do in shaping Abelard's religious views. Abelard and Augustine were somewhat alike as men of impulsive nature, but the former never renounced the indulgence of affection after the manner of the latter. Abelard's conduct more than once called for the charity of his fellowmen. He thinks of God as one predisposed to hide the sinner under the mantle of His love. He dare not, he could not, look into the face of a Divine Judge. There could not be such a thing as justice in God which demanded satisfaction. The legal philosophy of Anselm "was indeed wonderful, but his sense contemptible and devoid of reason. As it were, he kindled a fire, not to give light and warmth, but to fill the house with smoke."

Abelard's rational position would permit of no narrow view of revelation. Revelation consists primarily in the far-reaching influence of God's spirit, not in any particular collection of writings. Indeed, the sacred writings of the Jews and the philosophical writings of the Greeks are evidence of the truth. God has nowhere made a declaration of Himself in words which as such are binding upon any.[1] The inward character, not the dogma of revelation as held by the Church, is authority as Scripture. In this as in many other phases of his doctrine Abelard is a pupil of the Greek theologians of Alexandria.

Such a view of revelation was enough to arouse antagonism on the part of the ecclesiastical body. It was the beginning of reformation and criticism. The conservative forces rallied in overwhelming numbers, and saved the Church a few more years of arbitrary rule. Heresy trials became frequent, which fact always marks the dawn of better days in religion. The fundamental position that reason is the true ground of authority in religion had to wait until arbitrariness had done its best in order that it might do its worst.

III. THOMAS AQUINAS.

(1227–1274.)

The best which the doctrine of Church authority could do was performed by St. Thomas of Aquin, the most illustrious theologian of the Middle Ages. In him the Church had an exponent worthy of itself as the arbiter of human destiny. In this connection must be mentioned, not only the man, but the method, which saved the prestige of ecclesiasticism. Plato's idealism, strangely enough, had coupled with

[1] *Nec quia deus id dixerat creditur, sed quia hoc sic esse convincitur.—Int. ad Theo.*, p. 78.

it a thoroughgoing realism which supported the dogma of Church authority. But this idealistic realism, followed to its own conclusion, as in the case of John Scotus Erigena, whose worthy successor was Abelard, led to a rationalism which contradicted the cherished dogma. Hence arose the necessity of abandoning Plato or the dogma. They preferred to find a new basis for the dogma. This was discovered in Aristotelian metaphysics. True, the Church had known and used the logic of Aristotle, but not until the middle of the thirteenth century was there discovered in him what was needed to battle with the pantheistic and rationalistic tendencies of the day. Aristotle taught that reality was in an ascending scale, a hierarchy of beings of which God was the foundation and crown. The place of God is also that of the Church. In the shift to Aristotle the Church showed consummate tact. In St. Thomas of Aquin the complete transition is effectually made.

Philosophy and religion stand to each other in the relation of lower to the higher. The function of the former is to consider the phenomena of nature and to interpret them according to reason. To religion is given a higher work, the revelation of truth which pertains to the being and operations of Deity. What former theologians had attempted, and in part only accomplished, St. Thomas achieved to the great satisfaction of the Church. As with Anselm and Abelard, so with him the question of the adjustment of reason and faith was supreme. He answers that there is no contradiction between philosophical and religious truth. Man's unaided powers may attain to the former, the latter is the gift of God's grace.[1] The soul of man is the connecting link between the lower and the higher realm. It is the highest development of matter, and the first in the scale of immaterial things. The knowledge of creation, sin, incarnation, and the sacra-t ments is given from above. Reason may illustrate these truths, but i can never demonstrate them.

These two realms of truth are such because of the nature of God. He is arbitrary will, and has created the world for His own good pleasure. The universe must serve Him, although His happiness is complete without it. Even the means employed for the salvation of the race, namely, the death of Jesus, was not the only way open to God in the great work of redemption. Forgiveness does not rest upon repentance

[1] "It is impossible for the natural reason to arrive at a knowledge of the divine persons. By natural reason we may know those things which pertain to the unity of the divine essence, but not those which pertain to the distinctions of the divine persons. He who attempts to prove by the natural reason the Trinity detracts from the rights of faith."—*Sum. Theo.*, I.

as an essential condition. The condition is imposed for the glory of God. The soul is made to serve God. Should it know of eternal things by its independent searchings, it would be independent in life. It knows the realm of reason, for this was made a servant of the soul. The realm of revelation can be known only formally, as the truth is revealed by God's grace.

Hence the necessity of the Church, the God-chosen agency of revelation; hence, also, the Scriptures and ecclesiastical authority. Those who believe in the practical outcome of this theology owe an infinite debt to St. Thomas, for he established the doctrine as firmly as it is possible to establish a religious practice and belief which, in the process of time, must pass away. No wonder he is called the flower of Middle-Age theology. But the very intellectual positivism of St. Thomas contained within itself an element that eventually proved its most deadly antagonist. When St. Thomas affirmed that the soul of man is capable of knowing divine truth by the help of revelation, it was as much as to say that by nature the soul can, and by revelation does, know God. This is the seed thought of German mysticism. Revelation was not the special work of ecclesiastics, for it consisted in a beatific vision or illumination of soul. This revelation is the result of faith. What is this but the beginning of the Reformation?

Did scholasticism contribute anything to a better understanding of God and His relations to man? It certainly shows how far the human mind can go in following arbitrarily conceived notions. The chief characteristic of the period was this servitude to presuppositions and the supposition that logic never leads astray. All the scholastics were obedient children of the Church. It was a time of Church apotheosis.

CHAPTER VII.

THE REFORMED THEOLOGY.

The natural effect of traditionalism was religious degeneration. Ecclesiastics were subject to spiritual benumbment, and in time gave evidence of immorality. In the zeal of the Church to extend its material welfare devices as ingenious as those of the Pharisees were employed to make pardonable acts that otherwise would have shocked even an ordinary sense of right. The way was being paved for reform.

Mysticism was making itself felt in many a cloister. Greek and Roman literatures were rediscovered. Maritime discovery was opening the eyes of man to new possibilities. Invention was adding a new impulse to inquiry. Man was coming to himself. The result of the demand for a more rational Christianity and this new sense of life was shown in the Reformation, a movement whose avowed object was to revive the drooping cause of religion by placing faith on the basis of the revealed will of God in the Scriptures.

I. LUTHER.

(1483–1546.)

Wycliff, Huss, and Savonarola preceded Luther in affirming the cardinal truth of the Reformation, that the Scriptures can give the only authoritative answer to the question: "What must I do to be saved?" [1] But the burning of the Pope's bull by Luther in 1520 was the decisive step that freed the new religious spirit.

The striking contrast between the spiritual condition of the ecclesiastical body in his day and that of the apostolic age stirred in Luther's mind an inquiry into its cause. He placed in the scale of judgment Church forms, discipline, dogma, commands, and penalties, only to find, when measured by the standard given in the epistles of Paul, that they were empty and worthless. The New Testament was in such direct opposition to Roman tradition that an acceptance of the one meant the rejection of the other. Avowing himself as a willing disciple of Paul, whatever were the consequences, Luther had one emphatic idea to maintain: that God alone is the source of salvation, the sole dependence and strength of His people. For this idea of God he goes back to Augustine as a means of understanding Paul, and as Paul is nothing save as he expounds the Gospel, so he finds himself face to face with Jesus the Son of God. This vision of God, granted to Luther in a deep religious experience, was the soul of the new movement against ecclesiasticism.

Luther did not give his age a systematic theology. His was a far more significant contribution to religion, namely, a powerful conviction, an inspiration, that gave life to dead formalism and quickened again the sense of the nearness of God. It grew out of his own experience in securing forgiveness for sin. In the truth that God is always ready to forgive, that He is the living, loving, compassionate Father, he found rest for his soul. In the words of the eminent Harnack: "Above all anxiety and sorrow, above all the artifices of asceticism,

[1] Wycliff, 1324–1384; Huss, 1369–1415; Savonarola, 1452–1498.

above all the prescriptions of theology, he pressed on to Christ, that he might lay hold on God Himself, and in this act of faith, which he recognized as the work of God, he won an independence and steadfastness, yes, a personal assurance and joy, such as no mediæval man had ever expressed."

The leading thought of the Alexandrian theologians, that man is made in the image of God, was a cardinal thought with Luther. Yet he perceived that the sinner is brought in a special manner into likeness and favor with God through faith in Jesus Christ. This faith is more than a channel of communication; it is the vital principle of union between man and God. When the union is established, the forgiven sinner appropriates the very life of Christ and is raised into that estate for which he was destined from the beginning. Luther thought of God as a being having ethical perfection. What is given to man in Christ, namely, truth, wisdom, love, holiness, joy, and peace, are complete in the character of Deity. Hence the ethical attributes are fundamental in God. He is an object, not of speculation, but of reverence and love. He lives for the heart of man. He desires man as an object. Man desires Him as his goal. The Church is to give up barren dispute as to God's existence, and to busy itself with appropriating His life.

It is almost impossible to measure the gulf between scholastic thought and this aspect of reformed theology. It is the infinite space between the Church as authority and Christ; between servile obedience to form and spiritual appreciation; between penance and repentance; between the thought of God as Judge and the idea of Fatherhood; between a theology based on metaphysical presuppositions and a theology of religious experience.

II. CALVIN.

(1509–1564.)

Although Luther led the disaffected multitude out of the community of the Roman Church, Protestantism, as a logical system of belief, owes its existence to the work of Calvin. Calvinism, rigid, logical, and abstract, has been the greatest and most successful antagonist ever opposed to Catholicism. The personal experience of Luther, out of which grew his doctrine of faith, might pass from sight in a few years after his life was ended, but a formal statement of the same truth, based on clearly defined, logical premises, fortified by ample scriptural reference, would stand, yes, would increase in power

when its author should be forgotten. Such was the case with the soteriology of Luther and the theology of Calvin.

The theology of Calvin is a thoroughgoing exposition of the doctrine of God, His being, as such, and His relations to the world. This system of thought is not, however, as some suppose, wholly due to Calvin's individual work, but is to be found in all its main points in the system of Augustine. Calvinism is an exposition of Augustinianism. This is the explicit claim of its author. He represents Deity as the mighty ruler over a revolted state, the absolute Sovereign of the universe. God upholds all things by the exercise of His will, and governs all things according to His pleasure.[1] Accordingly there is no such thing as chance or fortune. Whether storm or calm, accident, life or death, all is determined by the counsel of His will. It is blasphemy to speak of the laws of nature, as though there could be anything independent of God. Whether the babe finds ample food at its mother's breast or is but sparingly provided for is determined by the will of Him who rules over all.[2]

Thus Calvin saw in nature, history, and revelation the exhibition of this divine imperialism. All divine commands received their significance from the mere fact of decree. All deeds were to be judged as to their worth in the light of obedience to the divine dictate. It is beyond human comprehension how this view can be consistent with the idea of Fatherhood, but it is to be accepted through faith, as it is made known in the Scriptures. It would be fatal to suppose that God acts capriciously or arbitrarily, for He always moves toward a worthy end. That end, however, is not in man as deserving God's blessing, but in Himself. God acts always in view of His own good, and thus proves His omnipotence. Such views of God Calvin applied with relentless logic to the doctrines of sin, election, regeneration, justification, and sanctification.

The whole system of Calvinism rests on the assumption of the fall of man, and the total depravity of the race. The race was on probation in Adam. He was free to obey, yet it was decreed that he should fall. Man lost all right to happiness in the transgression of Adam. Thus the race was plunged into ruin and wretchedness, in which state no individual has the right to complain at misfortune, and if blessing comes to him, he must recognize it as altogether undeserved. Since man has thus lost all claim on the favor of God, he cannot justly criticise God for blessing one individual and passing by another.

[1] See *Ins.*, 1 : 16. [2] *Ibid.*

Hence God has the right to elect a portion of the human family and to draw them to Himself by his irresistible grace. The rest are justly left under condemnation. In this way the glory of God is enhanced.[1]

Christ has made possible the bestowment of divine blessing. Through him alone man comes to God. Before the death of Christ no one was reconciled. The penalty of man's transgression was removed by the punishment heaped upon the suffering Son of Man.[2] In order that this suffering might not be in vain, God freely chooses a portion of the race to be partakers of this beneficence. Those whom He elects He calls; those whom He calls He justifies; those whom He justifies He glorifies. The effect of the bestowment of divine grace on the individual is first faith, then repentance, then justification.

The early Calvinists were consistent in maintaining the idea that God can find no motive outside of Himself, no cause for action save the dictate of His own will. Why He wills as He does is simply inscrutable. Even the existence of sin is according to the divine will as a means of a higher glory. The holy character, the justice, of God is revealed in punishment of sin. If there is any reason for election, it is to be found in the fact that otherwise there might be wanting those who should praise Him. A few Calvinists, however, the *sublapsarians*, sought to free God from the responsibility of sin in the world. They held that the decree of salvation and condemnation was entirely dependent on the fall. Adam was free to withstand temptation. It was not decreed that he should sin. But when he chose evil, and as a consequence brought condemnation on all mankind, God sought to save the work of creation and vindicate His own character by redeeming those whom He saw fit to elect.

However Calvinism be construed, it is, as we have said, Augustinianism with the ecclesiology of Augustine eliminated. The doctrine of individual election was a hard blow to Roman ecclesiasticism. The doctrine of God's will in revelation was sufficient to wrest from the Church in great measure its long-claimed authority. The general effect of the system has ever been to turn men to God.

[1] "We shall never be convinced as we ought to be that our salvation flows from the fountain of God's free mercy till we are acquainted with His eternal election, which illustrates His grace by this comparison, that He adopts not all promiscuously to the hope of salvation, but gives to some what He refuses to others."— *Ins.*, 3 : 21.

[2] *Ins.*, 2 : 16.

III. THE OPPOSITION TO CALVINISM.

A rebound from the extreme positions of Calvinism was sure to come. There soon arose a class of thinkers who affirmed that the doctrine of Calvin destroyed the unity of God. He had taught that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit had by mutual co-operation wrought out the scheme of salvation. The Father demanded the satisfaction of justice; the Son offered himself to appease the Father's anger; and the Holy Spirit was the agency whereby the sacrifice was made effective. Socinus and his school made a bold protest against Calvin's idea of divine justice, claiming that such an idea of God did violence to Jesus' conception of Fatherhood. There is no such justice in God as an attribute which requires or necessitates that sin be punished. God is and always was in the attitude of forgiveness toward man. Jesus was not a sacrifice to God's wrath, but a revealer of God's love. Any other view of the Godhead impairs the essential unity of Deity. The tri-theistic view of God has no basis in reason or revelation.

This practical recoil from the *a priori* assumptions and speculations of Calvinism was strong enough to bring about a modification of its rigorous doctrines. The sharp arrow of criticism had struck a weak spot. Under the leadership of such men as Saumur, Duncan, Geddes, Cameron, and Cappell, Calvinism was made to teach that God's will is universally benevolent, and the sacrifice of Christ was necessary, not only to remove the obstacle in the nature of God which hindered man's approach to Him, but also to make an exhibition of His boundless love. Socinianism, with its strong practical ethics, was thus a means of tempering the extreme views of the Genevan reformer, and, in fact, ever since that time Unitarianism, which is the modern form of the Socinian theology, has exerted a wholesome influence in correcting the tendency to abstractness in orthodox Christology.

But a far more constructive criticism of Calvinism was that made by Arminius and his followers.[1] If Socinus found a weak point in the Calvinistic doctrine of God, Arminius attempted to modify Calvin's doctrine of man and to set forth a more rational view of the principles of equity as related to the work of salvation. He concentrated his whole attention on the problem of redemption. He took as a fundamental position that man is still a free moral agent, capable of responding to the rational appeal of the moral law and love, and sought to inquire what would under such circumstances be the relation of God to him. He asked the very pertinent question: How

[1] Arminius, 1560–1609.

could mankind be justly condemned on account of Adam's sin? Could anyone be condemned without a fair trial? Could there be a consciousness of guilt on the part of the individual who certainly was not conscious of committing sin when Adam fell? How can man be regarded as responsible if he is born with a nature completely divested of all freedom and good?

Arminius said that Calvin's attempt to exalt God had degraded man. Total depravity would, if carried to its logical conclusion, entirely free man from condemnation. God would not surely condemn anyone who never had the ability to choose the right for himself. Arminius saw in man a being made in God's image; a being damaged by sin, but not hopelessly so. If the race lapsed in Adam's sin, man was still free to choose the right, and had the power also to make that choice significant. Justice to the individual demanded that each should be treated on his own merits. Personal guilt meant personal choice of wrong. To treat man on any other basis stripped him of every vestige of manhood. God made no decree regarding individual election, but was willing to save all those who exercised faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus died for all mankind, and not only for those destined to believe on him. Jesus bore the penalty of sin for the race, and provided a way by which the salvation of every man was a possibility. For God to arbitrarily decree that only a few should be saved would be an act unworthy of Him who is the essence of love and equity.

This doctrine of man's worth and essential character has since that time been effective in further modifying rigid, abstract Calvinism. Few, if any, in our day of the nominal Calvinists believe, save for theoretical ends, the doctrine of man as expounded by Calvin. Opponents to our own dogmatism often save our dogma from utter barrenness.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MODERN REVIVALS.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries discoveries in the scientific world opened a new sphere for human thought. Dogmatism in religion was met by the arch-enemy of traditionalism, the study of nature by the method of induction. On the other hand, dogmatism was attacked by a growing dissatisfaction in the minds of the common people in regard to the results of so-called orthodoxy. The most

staunch supporters of the faith were so concerned with keeping the form of belief intact that, although busy with dispute and controversy, they woefully neglected the salvation of men. This dissatisfaction led to the evangelical revivals and turned the thought of Christianity to the great problem of religious life. It is difficult to appreciate the significance of these movements, because we live in an atmosphere of their creation. The scientific spirit of our age has permeated the Church, and no thoughtful Christian would wish to see any hindrance placed in the way of rational inquiry into all subjects, the Bible not excepted. Likewise the spirit of evangelicalism has become so universal that, in theory at least, Christian character rather than forms of belief is recognized to be the *summum bonum* of life. There are some well-meaning bodies of Christians who are still living in the Middle Ages, or at best have not advanced beyond the days of Luther and Calvin, but this class will gradually decrease as the coming century will more and more demand intelligent vital godliness on the part of religious people, and a theology which is in harmony with the prevailing philosophical thought.

I. THE EVANGELICAL REVIVALS.

The seventeenth century should have been a time of remarkable religious progress. Instead there developed innumerable sects whose constant wrangling brought the reform movement into reproach, a revival of the scholastic mode of thought, an almost idolatrous conception of the Bible, religious intolerance among the supposed champions of liberty, as well as extreme formalism in religious worship.[1]

The depression in religious life which was quite universal in Protestant Christendom was the occasion of the rise into prominence of deism. Deism is an example of religious philosophy out of which has gone the inspiration of religion. It was a rationalistic movement of thought in opposition to the arbitrary view of Scripture held by the orthodox Calvinists. Its intention was, of course, broader than this, but for our discussion this was its chief significance. It was a spirit of rational inquiry set free by the Cambridge school of Platonists, which soon spread into France, where like a fire it threatened to consume the temples of orthodox faith. From France the movement spread to Germany, where, owing to the more constructive temper of mind among the leading philosophers, reason was invoked to aid rather

[1] "A dead rationalistic orthodoxy actually usurped the glories of the Reformation."—Stuckenberg, *Age and the Church*, p. 131.

than destroy religion. In this critical movement was born modern German theology.

In the early part of the eighteenth century, just as the religious life of the Church was being consumed in theological controversy, the heart of Christianity in England was stirred as it had never been before by the revival known as Methodism, whose early fortunes were shaped by the Wesleys and Whitefield.[1] Men of such spirit went through the land proclaiming the Gospel of the grace of God, while the leaders of ecclesiasticism disputed concerning the claims of reason. It was a new reformation, born of the vision of the saving Christ. Soon the whole country was aflame with religious enthusiasm. Here was the beginning of modern evangelicalism.[2]

In Germany also the age of religious decline was followed by a great awakening in religious devotion. The worldly attitude of mind fostered by criticism in the Lutheran Church was the occasion of the breaking forth like a refreshing spring in the desert place of the movement known as Pietism. Pietism was the answer to the prayer of Philip Spener, who, when court preacher at Dresden (1686), said: "The Lord mercifully keep us from interpreting Scripture solely from our creeds, and so erecting the genuine popedom in the midst of our Churches."[3]

Spener saw in the current theological speculations the chief enemy of spiritual progress. He made a violent protest against dissension and dispute, and proclaimed the doctrine of brotherly love. Since philosophy was the cause of the trouble in the Church, these seekers after godliness believed that all speculation must be avoided. Consequently Bible schools must be established to counteract the spirit of rationalism. Naturally enough the Pietists were charged with being the enemies of investigation and study of religious things and opponents of all scientific inquiry. But this charge was not borne out as Pietism increased in influence. The University of Halle became the centre of the movement. Tübingen and Würtemberg also gave support to the

[1] John Wesley, 1703–1791; Whitefield, 1714–1770.

[2] Mr. Lecky thus sums up the influence of this revival: "The Evangelicals gradually changed the whole spirit of the English Church. They infused into it a new fire and passion of devotion, kindled a spirit of fervent philanthropy, raised the standard of clerical duty, and completely altered the whole tone and tendency of the preaching of its ministers." We say the "beginning" of evangelicalism, because Pietism, although of earlier date than Methodism, did not continue as an organized movement.

[3] Spener, 1635–1705.

opinions of these zealous advocates of evangelical Christianity. It was not a great while before the influence of this revival was felt in Zürich, Berne, portions of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, and indeed the whole Lutheran Church was affected by it for good.

The followers of Spener and Francke were not qualified to give coherence to this new spirit, and as a result Pietism as a distinct, organized movement was shortlived. But its influence has not yet ceased. When we recall the heroic struggles and successes of Zinzendorf (1700–1760), the fact that thousands have been blessed by the missionary efforts of the Moravians, we are sure that Pietism was not in vain. Coupled with this is the fact that Schleiermacher, the greatest theologian of the nineteenth century, received his early training in religious devotion at the hands of these Christ-like men. The intention of the Pietists, if not their religious ideas, will ever be an inspiration to the followers of Jesus.

II. THE THEOLOGICAL REVIVAL.

The nineteenth century has witnessed the origin and partial development of a new theology. It has been made necessary because of the development of civilization both intellectually and socially. It has been the result of a demand on the part of the Church for a more vital conception of God than that wrought out by theologians of the past centuries, for a more rational conception of the method, matter, and purpose of revelation, for a simpler and more Christ-like attitude of will toward God and fellowmen.

The new theology is inseparably connected with the work and life of Schleiermacher.[1] In the midst of the controversy between those who held that the content of religious faith is contrary to reason and those who believed with Aquinas that religion is above the domain of scientific knowledge, this champion of a new view in religious truth is heard declaring that Christianity is grounded in something other than traditional dogma or argument, and that foundation, sure and steadfast, is the individual's experience of its truth. Living testimony of the power of Christianity puts the truth of religion beyond dispute.[2]

In this idea concerning the foundations of religion is easily traced the rising influence of the Kantian philosophy. He throws aside the possibility of knowing God by means of scientific cognition, but for that reason is the more emphatic in expounding the belief that religion

[1] Schleiermacher, 1768–1834.

[2] See Pfleiderer, *Development of Theology*, translated by J. F. Smith, p. 103.

is primarily not a judgment of reason, but an act of faith. In the heart of man is a feeling of dependence upon the Author of life. This is the core of religion. This innermost consciousness of dependence is the Holy of Holies. Here God first manifests Himself, and from this secret place issue all religious activities. The sovereign rule of this thought of dependence, what it signifies and what it produces, is salvation. The Christian's experience is guaranteed in the life of the Son of Man. Nothing was more evident in that life than this same consciousness of dependence upon the Father. The consummation of the life and work of Christ was reached when he said with sublime submission: "Not my will but thine be done." That attitude of will is the vital union between man and God. Without it there can be no religious life, and with it there can be no barren scepticism. This conception with its attitude of respect, rather than submission to dogma, is the very keynote of modern theology.

The further development of Schleiermacher's conception of religion has been left to others. One of the phases of the new thought, which is now exercising a strong influence in America as well as in Germany, is known as Ritschlianism from the head of this school, the late Dr. Albrecht Ritschl.[1] This school has furnished two distinct contributions to our present-day theology. The one is an attempt to mark out the sphere of religion, and the other is an effort to set forth the grounds upon which Christianity as a final form of faith rests. For its philosophical basis this new movement rests upon the well-known distinction drawn by Kant between theoretical and practical reason.[2] Ritschlianism positively declares that religion is the domain of appreciation, of valuation, rather than that of conception, and scientific or logical judgment. The test of religion and religious truth, accordingly, is its effectiveness in achieving the good. They with one accord say through a recognized leader, Kaftan: "Ecclesiastical dogma in its present form seems to be the result of the traditional methods for proving the truth of Christianity. But these methods are becoming less and less needful in establishing that truth. These attempts must in the very nature of the case be unsuccessful. Christianity is not a subject for scientific demonstration. It rests not upon a conception of a metaphysical order. It is guaranteed by the fact of its power to lift the individual to the highest plane of moral living."

[1] Ritschl, 1822–1889.

[2] Ritschl's epistemology is practically the same as that of Lotze.

This school is not sparing of its criticisms of traditional theology. According to their standpoint, theology has been formal, external, logically precise, but with faulty premises, resting the whole case of the truth of revelation, not upon an ethical basis experienced and tested, but upon the fact of its ability to maintain itself in a scheme of reasoning. In the passion for logical demonstration the theologians have lost the purpose and motive of religious thought. A return to the Christ of the Gospels is necessary in order that a simpler form of faith may prevail. He alone is the source of religion. The cause of weakness in the Church today is a misconception regarding Jesus. The historical man of Nazareth, the God-man, has been in every theological scheme represented as a being abstract and unreal. Theology has been wise in its own conceits. Dominated first by idealism, then by realism, the whole movement has been away from God, who is not a thought, not the conclusion of a syllogism, but an infinite will revealed in all perfection in the Jesus of history.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FUTURE OF THEOLOGY.

That the idea of God held by the Church through these broad periods of the history of Christianity has undergone serious modification needs not to be repeated. Every theologian has contributed his share to make this change in the progressive stages of thought. Theology, the work of individual minds as is all philosophy, is nevertheless a growth conditioned upon the ever-enlarging experience of the Church. The theology of today could not have been written one thousand years ago. The new phases of civilization have something to do in developing the conception of God. Scientific inquiry in the realms of nature and the Scriptures has made possible conceptions of the mode of God's working which were unknown before the scientific age. The content of modern social life, in putting new demands upon the Church, has forced the theologian to emphasize the ethical and social nature of God. The modern triumphs of psychology and the consequent new epistemology have given added stability to the function of faith, and in a helpful manner have limited the sphere of true religious knowledge. All these advances of life and thought have, as it were, brought God out of the realm of abstraction and endowed Him with attributes that in actual human experience can be appreciated as never before. There is a certain inspiration in the modern views of the nature of Deity that

promises well for the future of the Church. But with all this modification the final form of theology as expressing the new conception is a thing of the future. Theology as a science, while governed by the fundamental conception of the Supreme Being, nevertheless progresses much more slowly than its normative idea.

Because many theologians in their statement of Christian truth have, under the influence of their philosophical bias, failed to express the truth as revealed in the consciousness of Jesus, we shall not find in this fact a ground for indiscriminate or universal condemnation. Who, pray, is not compelled to err thus in making a philosophical formulation of religion? As we have already said, no theology can be perfect until the absolute philosophy shall have been wrought out. Some modern theologians, failing to appreciate this fact, are loud with criticisms of the bygone time. Because the progress of civilization has put a different lens in his hand, by which he may see facts in a new light, the aspirant for honors in this field is too frequently tempted to unjustly criticise those who were not so fortunate in their search for truth.

The movement in thought from age to age finds its counterpart in organic and social life. The seasons come and go. The earth germinates, grows, blossoms, ripens, and reposes again. Nations rise and fall. Birth, growth, and decay, such is the story of life. Even society conforms to the law of progress. Social growth is first a conviction, a life, then an institution, which in the course of time is too narrow for the life within; then follows a reform, a revolution, a new order, a new adjustment, and the process is repeated. Religion, too, follows the same order. From a spiritual life, the result of inspiration, to a human institution the movement goes on. The religion of Jesus is no exception to this law. In the lives of his followers religion was a mode of life and thought. It soon, in the lives of the Church Fathers, became a philosophy, a creed, and an organization more or less political in character. From subjectivism to objectivism the pendulum has swung. Yet the movement has been spiralling. Each circle has passed through the extremes of mysticism and institutionalism, but the successive movements have been on higher planes. The Christian religion has proved to be too great a force for any institution or formula to contain it. Institutions, creeds, theologies are but human attempts to bind it down for human needs. New needs demand new constructions. The new wine of faith can never be held in the old skins of logical statement, ceremony, and ritual. The truth here, as

in the scientific realm, evolves constantly in the mind of man with ever-increasing significance.

The work of tracing the more or less rhythmic movements in theology has in the preceding pages been very briefly done. From Clement to Ritschl the theology of the Church has taken on almost every conceivable form. The Greeks translated the religion of Jesus ideally, and formulated a transcendental scheme of dogma. The personal Christ was displaced by the Logos, and arguments concerning the Trinity took the place of genuine religious experience. The Latin theologians took up the guaranteed faith of the Apostles and construed it after the forensic manner of thought common in Roman life. Christianity then became an institution, modeled after the Roman Empire. Under the influence of scholasticism the Church moved farther and farther away from the spiritual inspiration of Jesus, and found itself at length in the barren regions of formalism. The Reformation turned the movement for a time toward its original source, which meant finally a new Church built on the authority of the Book. The intolerant dogmatism of the new Church gave rise to rationalism, which in Germany ended in constructive criticism. Along with rationalism came as a strong counteracting influence the modern evangelical revivals. Again men saw Jesus Christ as a living Saviour. Finally, such men as Schleiermacher awoke a new spirit in theology and caused a fresh breath of inspiration to come into the dead rationalism of the schools. We are living today in the atmosphere made somewhat free from the mists and darkness of traditionalism by the recovery of the historical Christ. All honor to the students of the Bible who in later years, despite the prejudice of many and the open persecution of some, have given us the new revelation. The light of scientific inquiry has given a new meaning to the Bible, and made possible theological reconstruction.

In the past theology has been governed by ideas of God which, if scientific discovery is not altogether wrong in its method and results, must be abandoned. Platonism, Aristotelianism, Stoicism, Scholasticism, and the vast majority of ancient philosophies, all of which have in large measure determined Church dogma, have been outlived. They stand as monuments to the ingenuity of the human mind. So are many of the doctrines of Christianity to be outlived. The saving power of God in Jesus Christ has not, however, lost its power. Nor will its power wane as long as human hearts need solace and forgiveness. Every age must interpret God according to its experience and

needs. As the human intellect develops, as society becomes better organized, as moral motives become intensified, so will God be better understood. The Church may have troublesome seas over which to pass. Whatever the cause of the storm, coming from within or from without, Jesus Christ will ever be the sheet-anchor of her faith.

The future of theology is to be determined by the interpretation given to the idea of God in the consciousness of Jesus. Amid all the confusion of opposing schools in our day may be distinctly heard an earnest inquiry: What did Jesus think of God? To think what he thought, to value life according to his standards, to appreciate and appropriate his attitude of will, is to know his religion. Christianity is the life of Jesus. Christian theology is the science of that life in us, from the standpoint of God. To take the attitude of mind which characterized Jesus is the only way by which we may have spiritual knowledge. Jesus is authority in religion. His attitude toward the Scripture should characterize him who attempts to expound God's word. The theological doctrines of Inspiration, Sin, Redemption, Resurrection, and Future Life, in order to maintain themselves in the best thought of the world, must be in accord with the historical career of Jesus, as well as with the accepted truth of natural science and philosophy.

Theology must also be restated in terms of modern life. Our age is one of science. Our language has undergone great modification since our theology was written. At many points theology fails for this reason to be true to the demands and spirit of the time. The man who has received his education in the schools during the past twenty years is very likely to be misunderstood by those whose forms of thought were shaped independent of the scientific spirit. A great deal of controversy would be saved if the opponents in dispute could understand each other's terms.[1]

The signs of the hour indicate also that theology is to be simplified. It will not be less scientific, but more so. Its range of observation shall widen with the succeeding years, and old facts will have new significance. There will be less weight given to ancient philosophy and creed. The real discoveries will be made in religion rather than in metaphysics. Thus religion, the oldest factor in human life, will ever be the most essential. Religion will be best understood in the

[1] "This inconsistency in men's words when they come to reason concerning their tenets . . . . manifestly fills their discourse with abundance of empty, unintelligible noise and jargon."— Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Bk. 3, ch. 10.

reflected rays of civilization. The Kingdom of God will come nearer and still nearer as a vital power in character. The truth of revelation will be mediated in faith, and arbitrary dogma will gradually pass away. The climax of human thought will be a theology which makes most luminous the character of Him whom Jesus called "Father" and possible the highest type of spiritual life.

And this reconstruction in theology is rapidly taking place. The new science of Biblical theology is an evidence of the demand for a simpler truth. Men have worked in the shadow of theories of inspiration, while the real facts of Scripture were lost to view. So dominant have the theories of revelation been that it has until recently been considered an indication of impiety to apply scientific methods of inquiry to the problem of the growth of our Sacred literature. Fortunately for the spiritual welfare of the Church, this attitude of false reverence for the Bible is passing away. The coming generation, let us hope, will have fewer worshipers of the Book and more believers in its revelation. There is a growing class of earnest, prayerful men who look upon the Bible as a record of religious experience, as a record of what God's spirit accomplishes in the lives of devout souls who seek to do His will. These men find no mechanical unity in the Scriptures, but a larger and more significant unity of spirit life. The final authority of Scripture, as reflecting the life and motive of Christ, is found in its power to lead man out of sin into God.

Accompanying this attitude of intensive faith in the Bible as revelation is a regard for the worthfulness of man. We are beginning to appreciate what Jesus meant when he said that the Sabbath is made for man, and we are ready to apply the thought to all forms of religous doctrine and worship. If theologians are loath to see the significance of dogma in the light of its practical outcome in the lives of men, the common people will demand such a view, and the demand on the part of the great mass of Christian people will be strong enough to force theory to give way. Man is coming to regard institutions, creeds, theologies, and religious observances from the standpoint of their helpfulness in overcoming the forces which retard his best development. Whatever else is lost — theories of sin and election, or whatever else may be necessary to accomplish the end — man must be saved. The Church will take its place in the very center of the struggle for human betterment, and whether or not our theories of religion maintain themselves in the progress of human events will depend on how fully they include all the deep realities of the soul of

man in its upward striving and all of God's plan concerning human destiny.

Theology will thus continue to be reconstructed by viewing the new world in which we live—the new world of material blessing, of scientific advancement, of developed intelligence, of increased social relations, of intensified moral values, of simplified worship—all from the exalted standpoint of the thought in the mind of Jesus when he spoke of God as Father, himself as Son, the sphere of his activity as the kingdom of heaven, and man as the constant recipient of the Father's grace and love.